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THE LONDON QUARTERLY & HOLBORN REVIEW

Edited by J. Alan Kay, M.A., Ph.D.

UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 1957

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Contributors Include

PERIODICAL
READING ROOM

COMMEMORATING CHARLES WESLEY

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THE EPWORTH PRESS

[FRANK H. CUMBERS]

25-35 CITY ROAD LONDON EC1

Four Shillings and Sixpence Net

THE LONDON QUARTERLY AND HOLBORN REVIEW
is published on 25th March, June, September and December. All contributions (typewritten, if possible) should be sent to the Editor, 25-35, City Road, London, E.C.1, with stamped addressed envelope.

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Editorial Comments

CHARLES WESLEY

ON 18th December, 250 years ago, Charles Wesley was born. He and his brother were the co-founders of Methodism, but exactly what it owed to each of them is not easy to define. Some of the facts about the early days are curiously unexpected. It was Charles, for example, and not John, who started the Holy Club at Oxford, Charles who first earned the name 'Methodist', Charles who was the first to be converted, and Charles who was the better preacher. On the other hand, it was John who was first interested in hymns; the journal he wrote in Georgia mentions hymns as often as it does prayers, and the Georgia hymn-book which he compiled contains several by himself and none by his brother.

Nevertheless, it was mainly Charles who enabled Methodists to sing their faith, and he is remembered and honoured today chiefly because of his hymns. As his memorial tablet in City Road Chapel says, 'As a Christian poet he stood unrivalled; and his hymns will convey instruction and consolation to the faithful in Christ Jesus as long as the English language is understood.'

The particular 'instruction and consolation' he gives has been much written about. His words about the Universality of God's love, Christian Assurance, and Perfect Love are much quoted, and his beliefs about suffering, his interest in death, and his habit of ending his hymns in heaven have been often commented on. A re-reading of the *Poetical Works*, however, reveals that there are other subjects, less often noticed, which were an important part of his thought and must have received less attention than his treatment of them warrants. We will mention three about which he writes with frequency, earnestness and conviction.

First, there is his continual teaching about the forgiveness of enemies. There were, of course, special reasons for this being constantly in his mind. One of them is that Methodists in the eighteenth century were subject to frequent and dangerous persecution, and their attitude to their enemies was therefore a matter of constant and practical importance. It is not surprising that Wesley wrote a number of 'Hymns for the Persecuted'. One of them was 'For the Brethren at Wednesbury', where, it will be remembered, some of the most serious riots occurred. As one would expect, it is about looking to God for help, but it does not neglect to say: 'Smitten, we turn the other cheek.' There is also another set of sixteen 'Hymns in Time of Persecution', which contains the beautiful 'Lamb of God, we follow Thee', which speaks about repaying hatred with love, and ends with the prayer—

*Turn, almighty as Thou art,
Turn our persecutors' heart,
Let them to our faith be given,
Let us meet our foes in heaven.*

It also includes 'A Prayer for the First Martyr'—that is, the first Methodist martyr, whoever he might turn out to be—which ends with a similar prayer—

*Inspire him with Thy tender care
For those who nail'd Thee to the wood,
And give to his expiring prayer
The men that drive his soul to God.*

Among the 'Hymns of Intercession' is one 'for our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers', and even in the 'Hymns for the Use of Methodist Preachers' Wesley deals with the same subject—

*And strengthen'd by Thy meekening power,
The more they hate, we love the more.*

It is not only persecution, however, which makes him write about loving one's enemies. The fact that he went through the Bible, writing hymns on almost every chapter of it, meant that he had to deal with it frequently; for the Bible has a great deal to say about the treatment of enemies—indeed, from one point of view its whole subject is about how God deals with those who are enemies of His. But whenever men are thought of as God's enemies, there are implications about the enemies of man. One can feel them in Wesley's comment on the words, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'. His verse on that passage boldly says—

*Greater love is not in man,
But greater is in God;
Life for sinners to regain
Jehovah sheds His blood,
Gives Himself a sacrifice,
His own most precious blood expends,
Freely for His foes He dies,
And turns them into friends.*

One can see the implication, too, in a hymn about Judges 16₂₉₋₃₀, where he turns from Samson to speak of Jesus, and says—

*He, by the pangs of death oppress'd,
With outstretch'd hands the pillars seized;
Compass'd with foes, He bow'd His head,
For mercy, not for vengeance pray'd,
And groan'd His last expiring groan,
And pull'd the infernal kingdom down.*

He cannot, of course, write a hymn on every verse of the Bible, and, as Dr Rattenbury has pointed out, he chooses those passages which can be given an evangelical interpretation, but he does not neglect any opportunity of writing about verses which teach or suggest the forgiveness of enemies. The Sermon on the Mount, of course, suggests several hymns on the subject, and he uses also such passages as those about overcoming evil with good and forgiving unto seventy-times seven. But he brings the same subject also into hymns about Palm Sunday, about Jesus's prophesy of His death, and about the passage in 1 Thessalonians concerning patience.

In addition to the general series of hymns on passages of scripture, there is

another series of eleven hymns on the words 'Christ also suffered, leaving us an example'. Here Wesley thinks of the various events connected with the death of Jesus, and taking Him as 'the lovely perfect pattern', he prays that he may follow 'in all His steps'—

*Conform me to the Crucified,
My God who for His murderers died.*

Yet another source of his concern for this subject was his own experience. Probably there were many occasions when it impressed itself upon his mind, but we know definitely of two. One was when his son Samuel became a Roman Catholic. He was deeply wounded and felt this as an experience of enmity. He prayed, therefore, that he might be like Christ, who was 'the Lover of His foes', and that he might be so filled with the spirit that he might 'cruel hate requite with love'. Before he came to the end of his poem he had attained the spirit he desired—

*If Thou forgive my debt immense,
I may forgive a trivial debt,
A fellow-servant's hundred pence
Against ten thousand talents set.
I do forgive, myself forgiven,
And haste to meet my foe in heaven.*

The other occasion was a fortnight before he died, when he prayed with many tears for all his enemies, naming Miss F.: 'I beseech Thee, O Lord, by Thine agony and bloody sweat, that she may never feel the pangs of eternal death.'

The second subject whose frequency in Charles Wesley is insufficiently recognized is his continual prayer for the unity of the Church. The early Methodists had a tremendous love for one another and a tremendous sense of belonging together. Like the first Christians, they knew that they were filled by one and the same Spirit, and that they were therefore themselves one, having indeed not only one Spirit, but 'one heart and one soul'. This infinitely holy and precious unity was a divine gift, but it was a gift which had to be nourished and sustained, and so in hymn after hymn Wesley prays about it. In phrases which he loved and often repeated, he asked that his people might 'think and speak the same' and be 'gathered into one'.

But the unity is not primarily one of thought and action, but of love. One of the early Methodist preachers confessed that 'the very sight of a Methodist would set [his] heart on fire with love', and it was this divine love, this greatest gift of the Spirit, which made them 'more than friends, All kinsmen in a bond divine'. Wesley believed that this love should be so strong that it would impress all who saw it, and especially those who were Methodism's enemies—

*Us into closest union draw,
And in our inward parts
Let kindness sweetly write her law;
Let love command our hearts.*

*O let us find the ancient way
Our wondering foes to move,
And force the heathen world to say,
'See how these Christians love!'*

It may be said that what Wesley is primarily concerned about is not so much the unity of the Church as the unity of Methodists, and that is partly true; he does begin with Methodist unity. But he does not stop there. He would have Methodists, like himself, 'Enlarged beyond the narrow space Of those that their own sect embrace And none besides approve', so that they 'Love all the lovers of my Lord And all who seek His love'. He does not think that Methodists are the Church—indeed, he says categorically 'the Methodists *The Church* are not'—but he thinks they can show the Church what it ought to be. They should be—

*Determined Thee alone to know,
And to Thy Church the pattern show
Of pure primeval love.*

Much of this is found in verses which, at any rate to Methodists, are well known—in hymns such as 'All praise to our redeeming Lord', 'Blest be the dear uniting love', 'Jesus, united by Thy grace', and others. But Wesley's concern for unity is deeper and more frequently expressed than is suggested by those hymns which appear in the *Methodist Hymn-book*. It is not only that he has many hymns on this subject which do not appear there, but that in many hymns which are on altogether other subjects he looks forward to the day when the Church will be gathered into one.

He gives two main reasons for the importance of unity. One is that in that unity Christians are 'built up' (a constantly repeated phrase) and kept safe. The wolf is constantly seeking to devour the sheep, but he can be defied by those who keep within the fold—"The sheep he never can devour, Unless he first divide'. Therefore, he prays—

*O do not suffer him to part
The souls that here agree;
But make us of one mind and heart,
And keep us one in Thee.*

The other reason, however, is the one with which he is most concerned, and about it he speaks continually. It is that only when Christians are united will the 'One undivided Christ' be fully proclaimed, only then will the whole world perceive that God has sent His Son that men may live, only then will every soul 'with one mouth confess The Saviour of mankind'.

*Closer knit to God and Thee,
Jesus in us make known
All the hidden mystery,
The Holy Three in One;
Thus convinced, the world shall feel
The Father's gracious will and mind,
Know He sent Thee down to dwell
In us and all mankind.*

The third insufficiently recognized subject which stands out in Charles Wesley is God's victory. It is of course present in many hymns which are in common use, but they do not reveal what a continual place it has in his thought. He never forgets that God is infinite in power, and therefore he is always confident that the victory is His. To be on God's side is to be on the winning side. In a tremendous burst of enthusiasm he cries—

*Away with our fears!
The Almighty appears,
Our Captain and Head.
We are all to infallible victory led.*

This victory will be won on every front. It will be won for the individual believer in his struggle against the external assaults of evil. In a hymn on the text 'Is the Lord's hand waxed short?' Wesley begins by remembering the Children of Israel being brought by the hand of God through the Red Sea and across the wilderness, and then he goes on to consider how he himself is held in that same hand—

*That hand hath open'd wide mine eyes;
That hand, which now by faith I see,
Measures the floods and spans the skies
And grasps the winds—and covers me.*

And remembering that, he knows that nothing can overthrow him. God is greater than all the powers of earth and hell, and the victory must infallibly be His.

The victory will also be won over the evil which is within. Wesley knows that believers do not always remain faithful, and he has indeed hymns for those who have relapsed into sin; he knows that backsliders may not be 'convicted and recovered', and he admits that 'A gracious soul may fall from grace' and not be recovered, that 'The salt may lose its seasoning power, And never, never find it more'. But that is not his usual mood. He loves rather to dwell on the complementary truth, that God will never loose His hold upon us. Our hearts are rebellious and full of evil, but, as he reminds himself in hymn after hymn, 'God is greater than our heart'.

This victory in the individual will be complete. Wesley therefore looks forward with confidence, not merely to being kept from evil, but to being enriched with good, and not merely to being made better, but to being made perfect. It is difficult for most of us to believe with any sense of reality that such a thing is possible, but not so Charles Wesley. He believes not only that it is possible, but that it is actually going to take place; he expects it. How can it be otherwise? Is God's victory to be only partial? If so, why? Because He does not mind our imperfections? Because he is not powerful enough to overcome them? Because it would take him too long or require too much patience and care? Wesley cannot think that any of these things can be possibly true, and the only alternative is to believe that God will really make us perfect.

*By faith I on His strength lay hold,
And walk in Christ my way,*

*Divinely confident, and bold
His perfect law to obey;
I shall perform His utmost will,
As sure as God is true,
And do the things impossible
Which Jesus bids me do.*

But God's victory will be seen, not only in the perfecting of the individual, but in the perfecting of the Church. His will, says Wesley, is that we should *all* be 'wholly sanctified Through faith, and perfected in love'; and since that is His will, it will come about. It is to bring it about that He has appointed ministers in the Church—

*The glorious ministry Divine
For this He did on earth ordain,
Nor can He miss of His design
Or send His messengers in vain.*

*They, under Him, His Church shall build,
And lead His feeblest people on,
Till all our souls with God are filled,
And ever sanctified in one.*

All this is firmly grounded in scripture, but there are few who really believe it. They may give the idea lip service, but it is on other principles that they act. They may assent with the top of their minds, but they are not convinced from the bottom of their hearts. Wesley was convinced; and he gloried in the expectation of its coming to pass. In days when the power of evil is so strong, when the goal appears not merely to be far off but in some respects to be receding, when so much that is good seems entirely impracticable, and when attempts to seek after it are so often frustrated, it is good to let Wesley communicate to us his enthusiasm and his absolute confidence in the accomplishment of God's will. Nothing, he says, can prevent the coming of God's Kingdom; nothing can overthrow it; nothing can stop it from being complete.

*He will the steadfast mind impart,
The power that never shall remove,
And fix in every sinless heart
His throne of everlasting love,
Bring in the kingdom of His peace,
Fill all our souls with joy unknown,
And 'stablish us in righteousness
And perfect all His saints in one.*

¶ Please see Announcements on page 319.

CHARLES WESLEY—THE MAN

FOR THE first two months of his life Charles Wesley lay wrapped in wool, never opening his eyes nor raising his voice in protest or appeal. A year later he survived an ordeal by fire when his nurse carried him from the flames that were consuming the old rectory at Epworth. On his fifth birthday he learnt the alphabet in the 'school in the house' where his mother, Susanna, taught her children. Next day he was able to read the first verse of Genesis: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'

With him in the schoolroom were two of his sisters, Martha, aged eight, and Nancy, who was ten. There were four older sisters, and two brothers. Samuel was a King's Scholar at Westminster School and 'Jacky' (John Benjamin or John, if one must be formal) was at home, now being taught by his father, the rector. It was a happy enough family in spite of all its problems. Charles enjoyed life at Epworth. He was only eight when he delighted brother Samuel, now an Usher at Westminster, by winning a King's Scholarship. For the next nine years, guided by his brother, fascinated by the Classics, influenced by Westminster Abbey, and developing his natural genius for friendship in the common life of a public school, he became a man. It was no small feat for so undersized, frail, sensitive and impressionable a boy to become Captain of the School and to win a scholarship to Christ Church. Already he had shown that he was a personality. He was certainly no coward. Had he not thrashed a bully in defence of little James Murray? Neither was he a 'go-getter', for he refused to become the heir of Garret Wesley, a wealthy Irish squire. He 'belonged' to his family at Epworth and no one however well-meaning, could persuade him to 'contract out'.

To Christ Church he went in 1725, with neither money nor patronage—the younger son of a country parson—but a youth with unsullied loyalties and an intense love of life. At Oxford he resisted 'gloomy and mechanical piety'. Did brother John expect him to become a saint all at once? All very well for a Fellow of Christ Church but—Then John went to take up a curacy at Wroote, the next parish to Epworth, and Charles suddenly changed. 'Diligence led me into serious thinking. I went to the weekly Sacrament and persuaded two or three young students to accompany me and to observe the method of study prescribed by the University, that gained me the harmless name of Methodist.' So the Holy Club began, but when John returned from Wroote, his brother insisted on him becoming its leader. It is not fair to cite this as an instance of an inferiority complex. Charles did not seek leadership, but he was never a tame follower. It was his friendly technique which gently shepherded George Whitefield into the fellowship. If he had done nothing else at Oxford, that would have been worthwhile. It may be true that John dominated this group as he dominated much greater gatherings later, but it was Charles who revealed a personal magnetism which attracted people, as the magnet draws steel. He drew the members of the Holy Club together, and the fellowship owed much to him.

The two brothers were human enough in their considerable friendships at Stanton Harcourt, but they were gradually becoming conscious of a divine vocation. Their visits to the prisoners in the Bocardo and their deepening sense

of the obligations and privilege of worship loomed large in their regular activities. In particular, Charles felt constrained to observe all the ordinances of the Church. His brother Samuel had impressed such duty upon him at Westminster. It had its definite result at this stage in his life. For a band of undergraduates to attend Holy Communion every week was remarkable in eighteenth-century Oxford.

The old rector died before Charles took his degree. He had been elated that his 'Jacky' had become a Fellow of Lincoln, and he was equally proud of Charles to whom he seemed most closely bound. When the sands were running out he laid his hands on his son's head and said, 'Be steady! The Christian faith will surely revive in this Kingdom. You shall see it, though I shall not.' And so, with the insight of a prophet, he took leave of the two men who were to waken England.

Presently, the two brothers left Oxford behind. Both of them had proved themselves as scholars and both had a sense of vocation. They took Holy Orders. Each seemed destined for a college living. At this crisis there was an astonishing occurrence. General James Oglethorpe had returned from Georgia with a Report for the Trustees. The founding of the Colony had been a unique experiment in philanthropy. Now there was a great need for devoted clergy who should minister to the mixed population of debtors from English prisons, religious refugees from Salzburg, Moravian settlers—not to mention the Indian tribes. Through the recommendation of Dr Burton, John and Charles Wesley, with their friends, Benjamin Ingham and Charles Delamotte, accepted Oglethorpe's invitation. Unfortunately, Charles, who hated letter-writing and administrative routine, was chosen to be the General's secretary.

It is unfortunate that so many writers have assumed that Charles Wesley's short stay in Georgia was a complete failure. This was not the opinion either of General Oglethorpe or the Earl of Egmont. Voluminous correspondence and the Minutes of the Trustees are available in the Public Record Office, and these sources confirm the invaluable Egmont Diaries in their findings. Though Charles was not acceptable to Oglethorpe as his personal secretary, he was appointed as Secretary for Indian Affairs in the colony, and conducted successful negotiations with the Chickesaws in an exceptionally delicate situation. When he returned from Georgia he presented a detailed, informed, and well-balanced report on the state of the colony in thirty-two convincing paragraphs. It was, indeed, one of the fairest and most accurate accounts the Trustees had received, and dealt with religious, economic, political and personal affairs. Although Charles Wesley was only in Georgia four months, he was retained as an official of the Trustees for eighteen months. (The regular payment of his salary is recorded in the accounts for that period.) In spite of the undue prominence given to the scandal created by two unprincipled women and the tactlessness of Charles Wesley in dealing with the situation, the breach between himself and Oglethorpe was quickly healed. As the General embarked to repel an imminent Spanish attack, he embraced him in token of their reconciliation, and Charles, standing bareheaded, cried out, 'God is with you. Go forth, *Christo duce et auspice Christo*.' On the safe return of the expedition, Oglethorpe did his best to persuade Charles not to leave Georgia, and obtained his tentative promise to come back as a minister of religion, if not as an official secretary.

Only his ill-health and the changed perspective caused by his 'evangelical conversion' prevented his return. It is unpardonable that, with quite inadequate information, some of Charles Wesley's detractors—even recently—have used the Georgia interlude most unjustly. Too often the basis of the 'debunking' biographers rests on secondary and prejudiced sources.

The next stage in the life of Charles Wesley begins with what is wisely called his 'evangelical' conversion. Both brothers were unsettled by their experiences in Georgia. Contacts with the Moravians had led to much self-examination. Peter Böhler, a close associate of Count Zinzendorf, intensified Charles's sense of something lacking. Charles had little joy in his religion, but nothing could lessen his loyalty to his Master. His friends, the Huttons, realizing his physical weakness and spiritual perplexity, asked him to stay at their house. James Hutton was a rigid High Churchman, with no sympathy for the Moravian point of view. Suffering from a severe attack of pleurisy, Charles was hesitating about accepting the invitation when, as he records, 'God sent Mr Bray to me, a poor ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ; yet by knowing Him, knows and discerns all things'. He went gladly to the brazier's house on 11th May 1738.

For the next ten days he was hungry and thirsty after God: '... I longed to find Christ, that I might show Him to all mankind.' The pleurisy returned. He was in great physical pain, but in deeper spiritual agony. 'I received the sacrament, but not Christ', he records. On Saturday 20th (May) he 'continued all day in great dejection, which the sacrament did not in the least abate'. On Sunday he found peace and a great joy. He saw that by faith he stood. That night he says: 'I went to bed still sensible of my own weakness (I humbly hope to be more and more so,) yet confident of Christ's protection. . . . Under His protection I waked next morning and rejoiced.' For the rest of his life he was to be a happy warrior, singing in the fiercest battles with the powers of darkness, smiling unafraid before angry mobs, and hearing, ever more clearly, the music of heaven.

Remembering his 'transfigured' life, it is almost incredible that Coleridge and Southey should both be content to declare the change was due to physical relief from an attack of pleurisy—a fall in temperature! By far the most satisfying spiritual diagnosis has been given by Dr J. E. Rattenbury in his classic study of *The Evangelical Conversion of the Wesleys*. It is as accurate as it is inspiring. He insists that the conversion of Charles Wesley on 21st May 1738, and of John Wesley three days later, were 'identical in content, but different in detail'. Many references in Charles Wesley's subsequent writings assert that the event changed his life. Unlike John, he did not win any intellectual victory; he had not been fighting an intellectual battle! One thing he knew—he had been blind and now he could see. When John came triumphant in his own new experience, his brother had a birthday hymn written. They sang together. To quote Dr Rattenbury's most moving words: 'Nothing in Methodist history is more appealing than the vision of these two little men, with streaming but joyous faces, singing in a sick-room, their evangelical duet—

*Outcasts of men, to you I call,
Harlots, and publicans, and thieves!'*

Nobody—least of all these two brothers—dreamed that they were on the threshold of a crusade that would shake England, and perhaps the world.

So Charles Wesley, strong churchman as he was, became an evangelist. The theme of his preaching was redemption, and he faced the wildest mobs with a face that, as Dr Wiseman once said, 'beamed with benevolence' and with a message that convinced by its utter certainty. At first he went to the prisoners in the condemned cells, and on to Tyburn. 'That hour under the gallows was the most blessed hour of my life.' He led their songs of praise on the brink of death. He rode farther afield, singing and helping to save. *Crescendo—fortissimo*—from village to village he passed, like Francis of Assisi, God's troubadour, and if need be God's clown, God's fool! 'In riding thence to Blendon I was full of delight, and seemed in new heavens and a new earth. We prayed and sang and shouted all the way.'

He preached with simplicity, force, and brevity. 'It was all thunder and lightning', said one in his congregation. His tremendous goal was the saving of the hopeless and the damned, whether they were in Newgate or a Cornish village or any other 'Devil's Island' where men were 'tied and bound in the chains of their sins'.

Though he came, like his brother, to a period of persecution, neither his courage nor his wit failed him. The crowds sometimes laughed at his sallies and took him to their hearts. Individuals felt he was speaking directly and personally to them. Like his Master, he stedfastly set his face to go to Wednesbury, where the mobs were gathering. 'The den of lions is as safe a place as any', he said. The crowds roared. 'My power increased with the opposition.' For relief, he came sometimes to preach to the faithful Society in the Foundry. ('I expounded Isaiah 35 and lost all my burdens among my brethren.') In the fiercest days he rejoiced because 'blessing he was being blest'. When he rode into danger he begged his friends to remember him in their prayers and 'pray me back again'. Stoned in Dublin streets, arrested as a 'person of ill-fame and a vagabond', he went his way singing. Was not this way God's way for him?

When he married Sarah (Sally) Gwynne on 8th April 1749, he was forty-one and his bride was twenty-two. There had always been for him a mystic significance in marriage, and in this happy union he found a deepening joy as the years passed. It is true that he no longer ranged the land as did his brother John, but it is also true that he created a home which was an exemplification of life in its happiest relationships. The Methodist interpretation of evangelical theology no longer confined itself to the language of the law courts but expressed itself in the terms of kinship and family. This was an important contribution to the people's understanding of the doctrine of salvation. Charles Wesley's sense of family was never clannish, and in his hymns, by the constant use of the word 'all', as George H. Findlay has pointed out, he goes 'up and out to the extreme limit of the human family'. Letters to his wife reveal his abiding love for her. Some of his correspondence shows that he was a normal, domesticated man, who could remember to give directions for the well-being of the cat when the house was left empty! Such trivialities are not altogether unimportant, especially when so many biographers are apt to stress speculative abstractions.

So, in Bristol and Marylebone, Charles lived many happy years with Sally, whose lovely voice interpreted Handel's music to her two sons and her daughter,

Sarah. There was no cushioned domesticity in their home life. Charles was an exemplary pastor, and who shall say that his continuance of an itinerant preacher's life would have compensated for his amazing contribution of hymns and verse? John Hampson wrote caustically: 'Marriage has sadly crippled Charles Wesley, and would have done the same by John and George [Whitefield] if God had not sent them a brace of ferrets.' But that is only the opinion of John Hampson. The Christian Church which has so gratefully accepted his hymns would pass a different verdict on 'the cripple'!

His poetry and his theological and political views are dealt with by other contributors to this symposium. Suffice it to say that his awareness of God prompted Dr Wiseman's statement that he was an 'evangelical mystic'. The vigour, intensity, simplicity, and, above all, humility in his versifying vitalized the doctrines he believed. His sense of the Presence was supremely important to him, and characterized his pastoral work, which, like so many parts of his life, was sacramental. 'Next to feeling Christ present', he wrote, 'the most desirable state is to feel Christ *absent*.' When we remember his physical frailty, many passages in his sermons have special significance, as for example: 'One thing we have to do . . . to emerge out of chains, diseases, death—unto liberty, health and life immortal.'

People who advocated 'stillness' were, to him, obnoxious. 'Lazy and proud in themselves, bitter and censorious towards others, they trample on the ordinances and despise the commands of Christ.'

For twenty years Charles Wesley was a travelling evangelist, facing every kind of hardship and many dangers with a courage that was gay because of his self-abandonment. For the rest of his long life he lived in Bristol and London, but it would be a mistake to think of these forty years as an idle Indian summer. To stress the musical evenings and concerts in his home and forget his earnest pastoral work, and his by no means infrequent preaching, would be to give a false view of what he deemed most important. Writing of two friends, he said: 'I cannot yet give up my hope that they are designed for better things than feeding swine; that is, entertaining the gay world.'

People like the Bishop of London, Lord Dartmouth, and the Earl of Mornington came to his son's concerts, held in one very large room in the house in Great Chesterfield Street, Marylebone. But this did not prevent him calling for his horse most mornings to take him to the Foundry! Often a little crowd would gather round him as he dismounted. He would greet them with great kindness, give out a short hymn and pray. Sometimes, he would enter the house and write verses that had 'come to him' as he rode through the streets. If it was an Indian summer, it was a busy one.

In attempting to characterize Charles Wesley, one may best begin by saying that his failings were obvious. He was hypersensitive, fiery and impulsive, and he shrank from responsibility. Having admitted so much, one must recognize that he was meek, patient, and humble. Such virtues were not the natural outcome of temperament, but the consequence of self-discipline and the grace of God. It was well said in the Preface to his *Sermons* (1816): 'He not only acknowledged and pointed out but *delighted* in the superiority of another, and if ever there was a human being who disliked power, avoided pre-eminence and shrunk from praise, it was Charles Wesley.'

His sight was poor, but his hearing was acute. Sounds rather than scenes gave him his pictures. Above all else his intuition and spiritual insight helped him to conclusions at which brother John arrived by sheer logic.

He was frank, but not as a rule obstinate. (Exceptional cases, like his foolish and tragic mishandling of the Grace Murray incident, must not be allowed to colour our picture of a most charitable and humble man.) Of him Samuel Bradburn said: 'He was a great scholar without pedantic ostentation; a great Christian without any pompous irregularities, and a great divine without the least contempt for the meanest of his brethren. His mind was as calm as a summer evening.' That was the judgement of a contemporary, speaking to people who had known Charles Wesley intimately.

His was, after 1738, a cheerful and benevolent religion. There was little subtlety in his expression of its truth, but, because he was no casuist, his simplicity was above suspicion. What he saw and felt he told with confidence and complete sincerity. As he said, 'Like Socrates, I know my own ignorance' and, like Socrates, he dared to say what he knew to be true. Smug satisfaction he detested: 'I laboured all the time to strip an old self-righteous Pharisee. At last our Lord got Himself the victory. We left her in tears and deep conviction. A greater miracle of grace than the conversion of a thousand harlots.' Such entries in his journal convince one that Charles Wesley was not easily deceived by false piety nor was he willing to countenance it.

There was a quality of persistence in spite of his kindliness. 'I never slack my pace for wind or weather.'

He *could* not like advertising, i.e. personal publicity. It 'looks like sounding a trumpet', he said.

In a letter written by him to Mrs Fletcher (Mary Bosanquet) just after her marriage, there is an interesting example of his lighter mood. He begins by chaffing her that his friend, Fletcher, had meant to propose to her twenty years before, and now prophesies that his life will be prolonged by this marriage. 'He is (I know and he knows) a mule by nature; but is become by grace, and by the wisdom from above, easy to be entreated! Be a little child yourself and he will be led by you unto all that is right.' The whole of this little-known letter shows a genial humanity in Charles Wesley, which his sometimes all-too-serious critics miss.

It would be absurd to ignore the weaknesses in both John and Charles Wesley, but it is equally absurd to exalt either at the expense of the other. How they would have loathed it! They found each other 'difficult', but how complementary they were, and how constant in their loyalty and affection. There was neither room nor occasion for two Johns, or for Charles in duplicate. (One is always thankful that St Peter and St Paul were so different, even though it involved some clash of temperament.) There is something to be said for the curb each put on the other, but the Church, and indeed the world, would have been the poorer had these brothers been alike. Numerous incidents could be cited to show that there was a struggle alternating between 'hard thoughts' and deep affection in the relationship between them.

Excitable, sensitive and brave, leader of light cavalry, a sweet singer of Israel, a very perfect, gentle knight—in how many ways one might characterize this man, so conscious of his faults, so sure of God, so eager to catch the music of His mercy!

For myself, I am content to picture him riding through the Kentish lanes, without a flurry of trumpets or an expectant Press conference! 'I crept on', he writes, 'singing or making hymns till I got unawares to Canterbury.'

He was a pilgrim—not a tramp—and so it mattered much that he drew, always, a little nearer to his goal. And, as he journeyed, others took the road and went towards 'Canterbury' singing!

LESLIE F. CHURCH

CHARLES WESLEY'S HYMNS AND POEMS

CHARLES WESLEY was a great poet, a fine craftsman, but he was not an artist. This paradox must carry the blame or praise of his singular achievement and accounts for his neglect by literary critics. With other English poets, he shares the reproach of writing quantities of undistinguished verse; it was his exercise as regular as Trollope's in writing prose, and it was one of his methods of learning, marking and inwardly digesting the Scriptures. He travels, one might say, miles and miles along the flat fens of Heaven upon his evangelical and scriptural occasions, his pace the more monotonous as the machine carries him so easily. He repeats himself like Handel, without scruple; turns a pregnant phrase into a cliché, and makes a routine of his insights. Some of his tricks of language and versification recur like answers you can get from an old friend by plying certain well-tried questions. Yet it is not the thirteen volumes of unread verses that have diminished or confined his literary fame, not the constant versifier but the great poet who puzzles or eludes the critic, for as he says,

When I am weak, then I am strong

His neglect of art is of the essence of his greatness as a poet;

*And when my all of strength shall fail
I shall with the God Man prevail.*

This failure and this prevalence were his vocation. He realized the mystery of the divine incarnation, in the flesh of his own time and country with a vision so single and entire that his language needs no wings. 'See my hands and my feet that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold me having.' As Charles Wesley says:

*What we have felt and seen
With confidence we tell.*

Thus in a sense his supernatural empiricism has impoverished his idiom. He faces incredulity, as the man born blind with a forthright statement: one

thing I know that whereas I was blind, now I see. He needs no metaphysical apparatus like the religious poets of the preceding century; there are few miraculous felicities of language, no sensuous riches and, though he tried everything on his pulse and did reverence to the holiness of the heart's affections very little of what Keats would have recognized as poetry at all. Instead of piping to the spirit or charming magic casements, he states events and quotes authorities. He quotes all the time, not from indolence in searching the language of his own soul, but because this is its language, the language also of myriads of justified believers. He turns the words of the risen Christ into terms of his own experience

*O could I now behold my Lord,
Discern and touch the Crucified,
Adore the true immortal Word,
And thrust my hand into Thy side,
And feel that Thou my Saviour art;
Whose blood is sprinkled on my heart.*

We must not ask the bard of Scriptural holiness to coin original idiom: the metal of his currency is the Scripture, and Scripture is the word of the living God.

Set him, on the other hand, between two masters of his own Puritan tradition, one of his own generation and the other of his grandfather's, Joseph Butler and John Milton. Butler like other sincere moralists held normal behaviour in high regard. He too believed in experience. 'Nature', he says, 'has endowed us with a power of supplying deficiencies by acquired knowledge, experience and habits; so likewise we are placed in a condition, in infancy, childhood and youth, and fitted for it; fitted for our acquiring those qualifications of all sorts which we stand in need of', and he discerns good grounds of faith in the analogy of religion to the constitution and course of nature, much as Pope had counselled the poet.

*First follow nature and your judgement frame
By her just standard which is still the same,
Unerring nature, still divinely bright . . .*

Then upon this sober naturalism breaks the full noise of hearts strangely warmed in the 'new house' at Leeds or the Foundery

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke: the dungeon flam'd with light;
My chains fell off: my heart was free,
I rose, went forth and follow'd Thee.*

Away with the Analogy! This is revolution. This not the Rolls Chapel, but Newgate, with Tyburn to follow. Yet not Newgate only, but Jerusalem, and not Jerusalem by nature, but that other city, 'the saints abode', where is the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Nature methodized? Nature 'supplying deficiencies by acquired knowledge, experience and habits'? All men by nature free?

*Withered my nature's strength: from Thee
My soul its life and succour brings;
My help is all laid up above;
Thy nature and Thy name is Love.*

And as the morning breaks with this whisper of recognition,

*'Tis Love! 'Tis Love! Thou diedst for me
Pure universal Love Thou art,*

we are strangely aware not only that the unaspiring rhythm is uttering literal truth, and that here is the univocal invitation of the Godhead, but that it is accepted and acceptable as such where nature has nothing to give. Where deficiency remained unsupplied, this is our calling's glorious hope, the dear redeeming grace for every sinner free.

The Wesleyan hymns were written as well as sung in the last generation of the old world whose cosmology had not yet completely submitted to Newton and physics; only the sophisticated and scientific had emerged from Milton and the Bible. Charles Wesley was perhaps a better classic than John, but not so omnivorous a reader, and neither had suffered any temptation to forsake the primitive earth of covenants, miracles and divine interferences which gave them their imagery. They could and in effect did live in the Bible. They could think in sacred images without misgiving and hold them as facts. To trace the flight of Wesleyan imagination compare its intention with that of the supreme artist who lived in the same world as theirs, Milton's song—

*intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime*

and he has the wings 'plum'd for immortality' to venture down the dark descent and up to reascend, but never to settle among his neighbours. His Saviour replies sagely to the Tempter but he knows nothing of the tempted; his Son of God can argue, but he cannot save. Charles Wesley was not pursuing but led in a triumph, not pursuing things unattempted but apprehending with passionate intensity something supremely accomplished. His imagination has reached its *pleroma* not soaring above the Aonian mount but ascending into heaven, and there he reports what he finds—

*With what rapture
Gaze we on those glorious scars!*

The 'dear tokens' are really visible to him. He has really heard the voice which says—

Enter into My joy and sit down on My throne,

heard and understood because it speaks his language,

*To us it is given in Jesus to know
A kingdom of heaven, a heaven below.*

It might have been, perhaps it was, the language his mother used when she assembled the farm labourers and village folk in the rectory dining-room. When he declares

*Thou art wisdom, power and love
And all Thou art is mine,*

he does but state in language as direct as Robinson Crusoe's his proprietary rights in all the resources of the living God.

More natural than Butler, more supernatural than Milton, and in both kinds, as he is nearer to men and more intimate with God, his poetry dissolves in preaching or prayer, and loses its claim to be considered as poetry except in a few stanzas of intense mystical emotion or in the skill with which he handles his craft of verse. This is altogether too simple a reckoning. To measure Charles Wesley's greatness as a poet we need, in a sense, to forget that he was an evangelist and to put aside our familiarity with his Christian speech; we need also to transcend the categories of the literary historian and to take this new genre unclassified, in its own right. To begin with, Charles Wesley is not an individual with that intense egoism which poets assume in highly cultivated society and especially since the Renaissance. He does not seek originality or cherish his own insights but observes a regular grammar, and like Psalmists or Homer or the author of the Servant Songs, is concealed in his utterance. Even Methodists have given but little study to his biography. The history of the Revival is the history of John, whose life is precisely minuted and richly documented. Charles is the voice of a communal imagination at home in the tribal ethos of the Old Testament, its journeys and miracles, rites and sacrifices, in the desert, in the mysterious communion of our father Jacob and the prophet Moses with the invisible God. Thence he draws a common language for a common people who approach the eternal throne and claim the crown, each in the first person singular. His view of history derives from the Messianic doctrine of St Paul and is nearer to the Pentateuch than to Burke. He sees the Captain of Israel's host more clearly than the 'known march of the providence of God'. He is in the 18th century but not of it. His apocalyptic idiom, lifted from Daniel or Zachariah or the Revelation, is sometimes obscure from familiarity, never from peculiarity, and it has been often observed how such a hymn as 'With glorious clouds' invokes some forty references to the Bible.

Moreover, he is confident—and this conditions all his poetry—that what he sings, prays and proclaims is valid, not for himself only or all Englishmen, but for 'all mankind' and this 'mankind' is not the theologian's abstraction of human nature, or a contemporary convention for 'society' or the average Englishman or the common lot of mortals, but every soul of man for whom *my* Saviour died.

*I pine for thee with lingering smart,
... Come, O thou universal Good,
... My boast and confidence and might,
My joy my glory and my crown,
My gospel hope, my calling's prize,
My tree of life, my paradise.*

Charles Wesley's own indeed, but also every man's own. He does not need or desire to express the universal claim to the universal good in the plural—

*What shall I do my God to love,
My Saviour and the world's to praise*

*Whose mercy is divinely free
For all the human race and me.*

'I' and 'me' simultaneously refer to this individual and to all individual believers: this is the language which belongs to the priesthood of all believers and draws its peculiar power in the Wesleyan hymns from this sacerdotal or mediatorial conception of the human person. 'My great High-priest in glory' shows himself to God for me and—

*Soon my spirit in his hands
Shall stand where my forerunner stands,*

but each of the thousand tongues which sing my great Redeemer's praise has the right to this promise and assurance.

*The gift which he on one bestows,
We all delight to prove;
The grace through every vessel flows
In purest streams of love.*

The hymns are composed by Charles and are individually the utterance of his own personal experience, but they will express and realize, they may generate, the same personal experience of the same personal salvation for tens of thousands of believers as they rejoice, pray, suffer, and seek full redemption. They are the script of a drama. The drama may indeed have its spectators standing sceptically aside from the action and regarding it perhaps as enthusiasm, a 'pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost, a horrid thing, a very horrid thing', but often the reluctant observer is drawn into the play, and thence his business is not to define belief or conduct himself in a godly, righteous and sober life, but to play the role and realize the action.

It is in this dramatic poetry, combining liturgy and evangelism, that we can discern the genius of Charles Wesley. Take it, where the grace of poesy scarcely appears, in such lines as the following:

*You whom he ordained to be
Transcripts of the Deity,
You whom he in life doth hold,
You for whom himself was sold,
You on whom he still doth wait,
Whom he would again create,
Made by him and purchased, why
Why will you for ever die?*

Straightforward prose which happens to rime? Yes, but it is on the lips of several hundred ordinary people, You, You, You, verse after verse, sung to themselves

and to one another, it may be line by line. Perhaps in the same hymn, they have already heard, as it were, issuing from their own lips—

*Dead already, dead within,
Spiritually dead in sin,
Dead to God while here you breathe
Pant ye after second death?
Will you still in sin remain
Greedy of eternal pain?
O ye dying sinners why?*

Well enough for George Whitefield, as great an actor as Garrick, to move his immense audiences with shame and terror and pity of his eternal theme, but here the audience itself has turned evangelist, and is preaching thus each sinner to his rebellious conscience, and asking himself the question 'Is it I'? If we compare the force and subtlety of this dramatic intention with the productions of contemporary playwrights, the comedy thrillers and melodramas noted in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, we can see that Charles Wesley, though in heavier and less inspired strains, has recovered one of the lost glories of English imagination.

What had happened to Shakespeare? We have his Falstaff with us and the laugh 'broad as ten thousand beeves at pasture'; *Joseph Andrews* was published in 1742, *Tom Jones* in 1749, and Hogarth, a few years senior to John Wesley, was now at the height of his comic genius; Swift, who died in 1745, had revealed in his time a Shakespearian scope of understanding and relentless penetration; there is London and Johnson, Burke and magnanimity; but what of Shakespearian compassion? Who is there now to listen to Macbeth's question, or to put it, 'Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?' or discern with dread and pity his greed of eternal pain? Who knows where there is so much convincing evidence, that all over England life is often a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing and who, employing the common folk to this end, confronts the national imagination with human greatness and misery? We know what a sorry thing the professional playwrights have made of King Lear. Who, then, does conceive the majesty, pride, wrath, grief, the diabolical treachery, the fall, redemption, ripeness of this human thing, and this sad time and the weight of 'never'? Who does so much as utter immortal longings or look towards the undiscovered country or turn mine eyes into my very soul or try what repentance can, what can it not? Who of all Englishmen has Shakespeare's undistinguishing regard or the will or means to speak for harlots and publicans and thieves, not as they hate, cheat, giggle or are turned off, but as they would be loved? Who, holding the mirror up to nature and knowing what a piece of work is man . . . this quintessence of dust, apprehends his real stature, his environment, his home?

In its methods and gestures, Charles Wesley's is the dramatic imagination. It was inherent in the Wesleyan preaching, in the character of a Methodist. 'They feel', says John, 'that it is not they that speak but the Spirit of their Father who speaketh in them, and that whatsoever is done by their hands, the Father who is in them, he doeth the works.'

*Fully in my life express
All the heights of holiness.*

Not my holiness, my words, my life. In its smallest detail, its whole pattern, its words and acts, the action has its Author who inspires and creates the actors and their parts. They have a 'Book': they not only recite it or understand it; they live and present it—*now*. You can see the swift passage from looking *at* to being *in* Christ.

*Ah, show me that happiest place,
The place of Thy people's abode,
Where saints in an ecstasy gaze
And hang on a crucified God.*

The exile is himself a watcher of the skies, aware of the beatitude and adoration, and homesick or thirsty to be therein—

*Thy love for a sinner declare,
Thy passion and death on the tree;
My spirit to Calvary bear,
To suffer and triumph with Thee.*

The flight of imagination is like that of Keats listening to the immortal bird or watching the little town emptied of its folk. Here are no viewless wings of poesie, but the visions and ecstasies of saints; no plaintive anthem fades, and though there be a sound forlorn of dereliction, it does not toll the singer back to his sole self. It is a dialogue of ever intenser intimacy, where, indeed, I the exile, the poet at prayer, speak actual words, but that Other answers with a miraculous act, an experience beyond speech, sweeping my soul to the heart of that happiest place, to Calvary, and the consummation of all human, all divine beatitude 'with Thee'. 'Whensoever they pour out their hearts', says John, 'in a more immediate manner before God, they have no thought of anything past or absent or to come, but of God alone.'

Yet if you are a historian, you can trace the whole story of redemption in these lines from the exodus to the promised land, through all prophetic epiphanies and messianic hopes and intimations of divine love, through ages of human aberration, growing clearer to the one perfect and sufficient sacrifice.

*Through Thee who all our sins hast borne,
Freely and graciously forgiven,
With songs to Zion we return,*

and here you are at home, not as watching the drama of redemption, but as crucified with Christ, as bearing the marks of Jesus, as eternally held in His heart.

*Endless scenes of wonder rise,
From that mysterious Tree,
Crucified before our eyes,
Where we our Maker see:
Jesus, Lord, what hast Thou done?
Publish we the death divine;*

*Stop, and gaze, and fall, and own
Was never love like Thine.*

*Now behold the Deity.
Now the heavenly birth declare
Faith cries out, 'Tis He, 'Tis He,
My God that suffers there.*

Faith indeed! the realizing light, rather the Shepherd Himself bearing my soul to Calvary. There is no debilitating routine of explanation. A dramatic and visual presentment of the endless scenes of wonder, a discernment of Deity, an explicit and expressed adoration, carry my soul to my God. Charles Wesley placards Christ crucified, and places himself and his company where in the presence of the actual event they whisper their comment, as it were, at the edge of the scene:

*Come, sinners, see your Maker die,
And say was ever grief like his?*

Then let us sit beneath the Cross

*Why hangs he, then, on yonder tree?
What means that strange, expiring cry?*

O let me kiss thy bleeding feet!

It is a thing seen and palpable as in the flesh, seen, not described, by one of the persons of the drama—you can imitate his gesture and share his grief—which person is any of thousands at Clifton or Gwennap, at Birstall or Newcastle or where you will, any one of them or all of them together, then or at any time, and all present at this time on Golgotha.

*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?
This Man receiveth sinners still.*

Thence issue the great evangelical imperatives Come! See! Feel!; dramatic imperatives: 'See, where the God incarnate stands; Come feel with me the blood applied; Come ye followers of the Lord; Come, O my guilty brethren; Come sinners; Come weary souls; Come, let us join our friends above. Look and be saved; See all your sins on Jesus laid; Behold the Lamb of God; Behold him all ye that pass by; He calls you now. Come ye sinners to your Lord'. Then follows the catalogue of grace, drawn with experienced precision from 'the pardon written with his blood' to the 'sight that veils the seraph's face' and 'all the silent heaven of love', set down in plain terms without any subtle evocation or over-tone, for other pardoned sinners to retrace and recognize. And simultaneously with such descriptive promise or experience proceeds the dialogue with the Crucified, like Jacob wrestling with the traveller unknown: I will not let thee go; I need not tell thee who I am; I am weak but confident in self-despair; speak to my heart'. This urgent demand 'to take and not bestow', 'to see Jesus crucified for me', 'to let me see and let me feel the sins that crucified my God', will grow so intense that we find the words of his dying Maker on the

sinner's lips as his own—'I thirst for a God that on Calvary died'—and he requires his answer now and here from the suffering Son of Man:

*Come then and to my soul reveal
The heights and depths of grace,
The wounds which all my sorrows heal,
That dear, disfigured face.*

They are words not only for the poet but for the whole community, not only to express but to induce the experience they reveal. 'Teach the lesson of thy cross' means not the doctrine of the atonement, but methexis, participation in the Cross itself: 'Let me die'. When the Lord has opened my inward ear, the verb to teach stands for 'bring into captivity every high aspiring thought that would not stoop to thee'. Even in expounding the still and silent sound, the whisper of grace, the metaphors are all dramatic; you could reproduce them in mime. The end of such teaching is not 'orthodoxy or right opinions', which, as John Wesley holds, 'is at best a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part at all'; it is to put on Christ, to be *in* the heavenly Lamb, to be wrapped in his crimson vest.

*Throughout his soul thy glories shine
His soul is all renew'd,
And deck'd in righteousness divine,
And cloth'd and fill'd with God.*

The servant as his Lord shall be. We are alive in Him, soar where He has led, stand where our forerunner stands.

*Caught to the bosom of our God.
A voice shall bless us from the throne,
'This is my beloved Son'.*

This is the primitive shape of liturgy, the immemorial theme of tragedy, the essence of true preaching. Above all, there is no fiction or fable in it. Charles is not handling a permanently significant folk tale, nor straining his credulity to grasp a doctrine with analogies and images. This is the profound reason for his use of a prose vocabulary above all at the summit of his inspiration: he is doing what prose does, namely, stating facts. The liturgy has come out of Church, the tragedy off the stage; the preaching does not instruct but creates: it is a function not of knowing but of being. The question arises, where is this action acted? What has happened, if instead of Dr Trapp at St Martin's, or Hamlet at the Haymarket, we have Christ crucified in Moorfields, at Wednesbury, at Bolton, everywhere? Nor is it merely a geographical everywhere. For *all*, my Saviour died. Not only a human 'all'. Charles stays at no frontiers.

*So strong the principle divine
Carries me out with sweet constraint,
Till all my hallow'd soul is thine,
Plunged in the Godhead's deepest sea,
And lost in thine immensity.*

*My peace, my life, my comfort, thou,
My treasure and my all thou art.*

and

All thou art is mine

and

*Who now by faith approach to thee,
Shall all with open face behold
In Christ the glorious deity,
Shall see and put the Godhead on,
The nature of thy sinless Son*

*Let me into nothing fall,
Let my Lord be all in all.*

Drama has no intrinsic limitation. It does not exclude; nor is it originally an objective spectacle deployed for the ranks of groundlings, critics, apprentices, patrons for their pleasure. It is the ritual in which the tribe realizes its community with its God and its dead, and it embraces all its livelihood, its flocks and cattle, corn and oil and wine, its soil and sky, then with mature experience all that moves the human heart or invites or defies human understanding. It incorporates all that it exhibits, and gathers all the mystery and purpose of tribal life in to the present. It makes eternity *here*, the future and past *now*; the pain and passion, justice and mercy, fear and hope it presents as I. The language of distance and absence—abstract nouns, third-personal pronouns, static propositions and hypotheses—it abolishes. It brings in the living presence, the Parousia, with its name, I AM. The dialogue is not I-Thou but I-I.

*Soul of my soul remain,
Who didst for all fulfil,
In me, O Lord, fulfil again
Thy heavenly Father's will,*

namely, Thy holy incarnation, Thy death and passion, Thy glorious resurrection and ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost. To find this fulfilment of the heavenly Father's will in *me*, in every me, with undistinguishing regard, and to discover the Soul of my soul wherever the human soul cries out of the deep or aspires after his home, is Charles Wesley's dramatic vocation,

*O put me in the cleft, empower
My soul the glorious sight to bear.*

This and all things are possible where there is no shadow of doubt that

*Jesus is our brother now,
And God is all our own.*

T. S. GREGORY

CHARLES WESLEY, PREACHER

ON 14TH OCTOBER 1735 Charles Wesley sailed for Georgia, having been ordained a few days previously, by the Bishop of London, to the full ministry of the Anglican Church. He had been a reluctant ordinand, unconscious of any urgent call to a separated ministry. In his own words: 'My brother [John], who always had the ascendant over me, persuaded me to accompany him . . . to Georgia. I exceedingly dreaded entering into Holy Orders, but he overruled me here also.' We presume, then, that he had not preached hitherto, though he had taken a prominent part in the activities of the Holy Club, but he straightway honoured his new responsibility and composed and preached sermons during the voyage across the Atlantic.

In 1816 Mrs Charles Wesley published a short *Memoir* of her husband with twelve of his sermons, almost all of them dating from the American period. It is a revealing little volume. There is a certain fervour about these rather formal discourses which, for the most part, are little more than exhortations to moral and God-fearing living. He preached to his fellow-voyagers on 'the light of the body is the eye, etc.', and repeated the sermon on arrival in Frederica, challenging his hearers thus:

God has brought you safely here. Now choose whether you will serve Him or not. You must serve Him *wholly*. You cannot have two masters. It is a matter of *mind*. Serve God with your mind. In all things have a single regard to God.

This is good as far as it goes and was, in one form or another, the burden of his earliest preaching. Only by righteous living can we escape 'the punishment due to those who live for themselves and not to God'. 'Let us labour to be perfectly whole.' The emphasis lies mainly upon the human element in Salvation.

Charles Wesley remained in America for less than six months and reached England on 3rd December 1736. Periods of illness and visits to friends followed, and apparently he preached for the first time after his return on Trinity Sunday, 5th June, on 'Few saved'. Thereafter the occasional references to preaching that occur in the *Journal* suggest that his old sermons were being requisitioned, as when he preached, once on 11th September and twice on 30th October, on 'The one thing needful'.

From this point his *Journal* is of increasing interest. He has heart-to-heart talks with Peter Böhler, and describes how, often in pain of body no less than of mind, he sought for personal assurance of his acceptance with God through faith in Christ and urged others to do the same. Under date 17th May 1738, he recounts: 'From this time I endeavoured to ground as many of our friends as came in this fundamental truth, Salvation by Faith alone; not an idle, dead faith, but a faith which works by love and is necessarily productive of all good works and all holiness.'

The following Sunday he wrote: 'I began writing my first sermon in the name of Christ my Prophet', and on 2nd July, at Basingshaw, he preached for the first time since his spiritual conversion and illness. 'Being to preach this morning for the first time, I received strength for the work of the ministry, in prayer and singing . . . I preached Salvation by Faith to a deeply attentive audience.' On

10th July he, with others, visited Newgate, where he preached 'with a heavy heart' to ten condemned malefactors. Doubtful of the possibility of a 'death-bed repentance', it was but a 'languid discourse'; but even as he preached 'a sudden spirit of faith' came upon him and he promised pardon to all if they would 'repent and believe the Gospel'. Thus began a notable and continuous ministry to prisoners who, so often in those days, were more sinned against than sinning.

It was only after his spiritual conversion that Charles Wesley discarded the faultlessly-written little homilies of his earlier ministry and began truly to *preach*. His lips had been touched with the live coal from off the altar and he became, almost instantly, an impassioned evangelist. In this respect he seems to have excelled even his brother John. No longer was the emphasis upon 'the righteousness of the law' and salvation by works, but upon the righteousness which is by faith in the atoning work of Christ. The *Journal* records much preaching in churches of the Establishment and in semi-private gatherings, when his texts were for the most part those which lend themselves naturally to evangelistic preaching. On 3rd September he 'preached Salvation by Faith at Westminster Abbey'. He was rapidly gaining confidence in his message and his ability to deliver it. He preached (11th July 1738) at St Helen's 'to a vast congregation with great boldness, adding much extempore'. Becoming less and less dependent upon notes, he discarded them entirely on 11th February 1739, 'the Lord being greatly my helper. Let Him have all the glory.'

But a still wider freedom was awaiting Charles Wesley. As with his brother and George Whitefield, his presentation of the Gospel of Redemption, although wholly in accord with the statutory beliefs of the Church of England, alienated an increasing number of the clergy, who closed their pulpits against him. On the face of it, there was no reason why both he and his brother John should not, at this stage, have become exemplary incumbents of Anglican parishes, dying at last in honourable obscurity; and then there would have been no Methodism. But when, in March 1738, a dramatic call came from George Whitefield to John Wesley to take up open-air preaching work in Bristol and John hesitatingly obeyed, a fresh chapter opened; many old things passed away and much became new. Charles was not easily reconciled to such defiance of convention, but the crowds that attended his brother and Whitefield and the 'signs and wonders' that followed broke down his reluctance, which, he confessed, was due in part to 'the fear of man'. Urged by Whitefield and after much prayer for guidance, on Sunday, 24th June, he 'went forth in the name of Jesus Christ. I found near 10,000 helpless sinners waiting for the Word in Moorfields. I invited them, in my Master's words, as well as mine, "Come unto Me, all ye that travail, and I will give you rest". The Lord was with me, even me, His meanest creature, according to His promise.' That evening he 'walked on to the Common and cried to multitudes upon multitudes, "Repent ye and believe the Gospel". The Lord was my strength and my mouth and my wisdom.' So, in his own words, Charles Wesley 'broke down the bridge' and stood superbly equipped for the ministry that lay before him.

The following Sunday he preached the University sermon in St Mary's, Oxford, 'with great boldness', and his subject was Justification. It met with official disapproval and the Dean spoke to him 'with unusual severity against field-preaching'.

But Charles was undeterred. So plain was the seal of Divine approval upon this type of ministry that neither deans nor dons, magistrates nor mobs, could henceforth restrain him. He had his moments of depression and doubt as when (10th August, 1739) he wrote to Whitefield: 'I am continually tempted to leave off preaching and hide myself. . . . Do not reckon upon me, my brother, in the work God is doing, for I cannot expect that He should long employ one who is ever longing and murmuring to be discharged.' Nevertheless the work went forward. Moorfields, Kennington Common and, later, Bristol, saw and heard much of him. Multitudes gathered to hear him and many were the conversions that took place.

Henceforward his ministry was both within and without doors, especially as the number of Methodist preaching-houses increased. If churches were closed against him, there were always the fields and highways, and there were established those human contacts which issued in Methodism. Sometimes the two congregations coalesced, as at Runswick (26th August 1739) where, he says, 'the minister lent me his pulpit, I stood at the window (which was taken down). . . . The church was full as it could crowd. Thousands stood in the churchyard. It was the most beautiful sight I ever beheld.' Walls, tables, chairs, cockpits—anything handy that enabled him easily to be seen and heard, served as a pulpit or forum and round him the crowds gathered, undeterred by rioting or weather. The mobs that assailed Charles Wesley seem, for the most part, to have been more numerous and vicious than those which attended his brother, and at times his life was in danger. One of the earliest references is to an abortive attempt at Gloucester (23rd August, 1739), when dogs were urged forward into the congregation, but in vain; 'the dumb dogs rebuked the rioters'. But it was not always to be so. There were terrible scenes in Cornwall, Devizes and other places, but, like John, Charles always stood forth unflinchingly and faced and rebuked the mob, not infrequently changing its whole temper. Opposition had a certain heartening effect upon him, as when, for example, he preached in Bristol (15th October, 1739) and 'in the midst of my discourse Satan lift up his voice in his own children; which increased my boldness. I told the people Christ had a work to do and they should find it so. The sons of Belial soon quitted the field; but the power of the Lord continued with us.'

In the early days his preaching was disturbed by people who fell into hysterics or convulsions. Almost from the beginning Charles was suspicious of these scenes and soon attributed them to Satanic agency. He tells how (12th June, 1740) 'the adversary roared in the midst of the congregation; for to him and not to the God of order do I impute these horrible outcries which almost drowned my voice and kept back the glad tidings from sinners'. Having, as he suspected, detected some 'counterfeits', Charles developed his own way of dealing with them, such as ignoring them, if possible, or ordering their removal from the congregation and giving notice that imitators would receive the same treatment. This method was usually successful, as he writes on one occasion, 'my porters had no employment the whole night'. These were cases of mere exhibitionism, but there were also genuine cases of psychological disturbance which gradually became less frequent and at length almost ceased.

Charles Wesley exercised an itinerant ministry as arduous as that of his brother for twenty years and to follow him in his journeys in England, Ireland,

and Wales would require a volume. He preached the University sermon again in Oxford on 4th April, 1742, but his journal during that period is missing. His text was 'Awake, thou that sleepest', and the discourse is now one of the Standard Sermons of Methodism and so within the reach of all. Thomas Jackson, his biographer, doubted whether 'any sermon in the English language or in any other . . . has passed through so many editions (sixteen in seven years) or has been a means of so much spiritual good'.

In the strong-room of the Epworth Press there is a bundle of Charles Wesley's sermons in manuscript, but they are disappointing and scarcely help us to visualize the great preacher. Clearly they were never intended for the press, being largely notes and jottings with an occasional fully written passage. The texts are those which are so lavishly recorded in his *Journal*. The themes are those which were emphasized in the Revival and are regarded as characteristic of Methodism, though, being pure New Testament doctrine, they should be—and largely are today—characteristic of every Protestant Church. They stress the need for consciousness of and penitence for sin and they emphasize God's offer of forgiveness in Christ, which, accepted, leads to the sanctified life of peace and joy and divine fellowship, with the assurance of a Hereafter of Blessedness. Less frequently the consequences of rejection are dwelt upon in terms of the general theological thought of the day.

If ever a preacher proclaimed the Christian gospel with utter conviction it was Charles Wesley, and therein lay largely the secret of his wonderful success. There was something 'magnetic' about him, and in powers of oratory, in the best sense of that word, he appears to have rivalled Whitefield himself. Rarely did his appeals fail, and his brother John once admitted that in respect of short, pointed appeals Charles surpassed him, as much as he himself surpassed Charles in consecutive reasoning. On 12th July 1741 Charles preached in Bristol on Titus 2¹¹⁻¹⁴—and he comments on the service: 'The power and seal of God is never wanting while I declare the two great truths of the everlasting gospel, universal redemption and Christian perfection.'

Charles Wesley's voice was also one of his great assets. He records how, at Bristol, he preached to a congregation that 'filled the valley and sides of a hill like grasshoppers for multitude. Yet my voice reached the most distant, as I perceived them bowing at the Holy Name. God gave me the voice of a trumpet and sent the word home to many hearts.' He had also a fine singing voice, and occasionally, during his sermon, he sang verses that emphasized the message he was delivering. His statue in Bristol shows him in what seems to have been a characteristic preaching attitude, with right arm fully extended, the palm of the hand uppermost, as 'offering Christ' to his hearers.

In 1749 he married Sarah Gwynne, and occasionally at first she accompanied him on his preaching tours. Family responsibilities gradually curtailed his activities, but they did not cease, and he continued as an itinerant preacher for seven more years. The last twenty-five years of his life were spent in Marylebone, and he preached chiefly in the neighbourhood and frequently in the New Chapel in the City Road to within a short time of his death. Miss D. M. Jones, in her loving study of Charles Wesley, tells how he preached in growing weakness and adds:

At his best his manner in the pulpit had great authority and vigour, great tenderness also. As he grew old, he fell into the habit of making long pauses, closing his eyes, leaning on his Bible and fumbling with his hand. Sometimes he made the congregation sing while he was taking breath and gathering strength to proceed.

We are greatly indebted to many who heard him and recorded their impressions. John Nelson describes how 'the Lord was with him in such a manner that the pillars of hell seemed to tremble; many that were famous for supporting the devil's kingdom fell to the ground while he was preaching, as if they had been thunderstruck'. John Valton, another of the preachers, tells how 'his word was with power and I thought my Saviour was at hand, never being so sensibly affected under a discourse before'.

Other striking testimonies could be given did space allow, but we must notice one outstanding and possibly unique feature about the ministry of Charles Wesley. He still preaches the same gospel that he proclaimed during his lifetime and almost certainly will so long as the Christian Church shall endure. Dust may lie thickly on the tomes of eighteenth-century sermons, but there are few churches in Methodism—and even beyond her borders—in which Charles Wesley does not preach on almost every Sunday of the year in those glorious hymns which are so rich a part of our Christian heritage, and dead and dying souls are quickened into newness of life. Hear Him, in those moving Invitation Hymns, with their reiterated 'Come'.

*Sent by my Lord, on you I call;
The invitation is to all;
Come, all the world: come sinner thou!
All things in Christ are ready now.*

Still do worshippers pray with him:

*O that with all Thy saints I might
By sweet experience prove
What is the length and breadth and height
And depth of perfect love!*

Still he cheers them upward and onward as they sing:

*Not all the powers of hell can fright
A soul that walks with Christ in light;
He walks and cannot fall:
Clearly he sees, and wins his way
Shining unto the perfect day;
And more than conquers all,*

and they exult with him as confidently and joyously he proclaims,

*Our Saviour, Brother, Head,
Our All-in-all is He;
And in His steps who tread
We soon His face shall see:
Shall see Him with our glorious friends,
And then in Heaven our journey ends.*

Truly he, being dead, yet preacheth.

W. L. DOUGHTY

THE PROSE WRITINGS OF CHARLES WESLEY

THE FAME of Charles Wesley rests solidly upon his verse, which was undoubtedly his *métier*. His prose, however, should not be neglected. The first of his many publications was in prose—*A Short Account of the Death of Mrs Hannah Richardson*. This eight-page pamphlet, priced at 1d., appeared in 1741, went through four editions in two years, and was reprinted at widening intervals even into the nineteenth century. It presented the simple story of a young woman's spiritual trials, a story which gave the lie to the contemporary teaching of Philip Henry Molther, the Moravian, that the means of grace are both useless to the unconverted and unimportant to the converted, teaching summed up under the term 'stillness'. The pamphlet is a model of unadorned narrative, even though it does not achieve the staccato quality of John Wesley at his best. The opening sentence ushers the reader immediately into the presence of Hannah Richardson: 'I was hastily call'd to one that was a-dying.' By means of a 'flash-back', Charles Wesley then outlines her religious awakening and subsequent long months of spiritual darkness. In particular he stresses the manner of her seeking for the light:

She waited in a constant Use of all the Means of Grace; never miss'd the Communion, or hearing the Word, tho' all was Torment to her, for she never found Benefit; nothing, she said, affected her, there was none so wicked as her. I am a Witness to her many Complaints and Wailings. Yet she persisted with a glorious Obstinacy. . . . She did not sit *still*, till she should be pure in Heart, but redeem'd the Time, and bought up every Opportunity of doing Good.

He adds this comment:

See here a Pattern of true Mourning! A Spectacle for Men and Angels! A Soul standing up under the intollerable Weight of Original Sin! Troubled on every Side; perplexed, but not in Despair; persecuted by Sin, the World, and the Devil, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; walking on as evenly under that Load of Darkness, as if she had been in the broad Light of God's Countenance. Whosoever thou art that seeketh Christ sorrowing, *Go thou and do likewise*.

Eventually the light shone, and the closing sentences portray Hannah Richardson's peaceful death:

Her Hope was full of Immortality, her Looks of Heaven, 'till with Smiles of Triumph she resign'd her Spirit into the Hands of her dear Redeemer. Death wanted all its Pomp and Circumstance of Horror. She went away without any Agony, or Sigh, or Groan. She only rested; and sweetly fell asleep in the Arms of Jesus.

In this lovely tract—the first venture in Methodist biography—is heralded not only the natural eloquence of Charles Wesley, but his literary discipline. *Hannah Richardson* came from the same pen that was to revise the manuscript poems on the Gospels and the Acts seven times in thirteen years, constantly trimming and polishing a word here, a phrase there.

Of Charles Wesley's published sermons we must speak only briefly, since his preaching is discussed in another article. For our present purpose it is sufficient to point out that the popularity of his sermon preached before the University of

Oxford in 1742 ('Awake, thou that sleepest'), which passed through over fifty editions, was due more to the fervour of its language than to the compulsion of its argument. John's own summary is accurate: 'In connexion I beat you; but in strong, pointed sentences you beat me.'¹ Charles Wesley's only other prose publication was the rare sermon on *The Cause and Cure of Earthquakes*, occasioned by the vigorous tremor of 8th March 1750. The scientific introduction is followed by a lengthy historical survey which moves swiftly through examples of the devastation and demoralization caused by earthquakes. Only the closing quarter, a forceful call to repentance as the 'Cure of Earthquakes', is really preaching proper.

These three items form the extent of the prose certainly published by Charles Wesley himself, though an account of his musical sons was published by the Honourable Daines Barrington in the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1781 and also in his *Miscellanies*, and it is likely that Charles Wesley was the author of the anonymous *Strictures on the Rev. Dr Coke's Ordination Sermon, preached at Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, in December 1784*. Among the handful of manuscript items which survive, the most important is that 'On a Weekly Sacrament',² but this, like his early sermons, suffers from a turgidity of style that occasionally affected even John Wesley in his youth.

Easily the most important of Charles Wesley's prose writings are his journals and letters. In actual fact, these two categories overlap considerably. Not only does his formal journal incorporate many of his letters, but scores of his letters, particularly to his brother John and to his wife, were in the form of journals, with brief personal messages appended. John Wesley normally 'wrote up' his journal from a diary; Charles seems to have transcribed much of his journal from his letters, which are often fuller in detail—though it is by no means certain in every case which version came first. Various scribes made copies of these journal-letters, both for private circulation, and for public reading in the Societies on the monthly 'letter-days'. A number are extant in the hand of John Wesley. Of the scores which must have circulated, only fifty appear to have survived. They commence on the eve of Charles Wesley's departure from Georgia in the summer of 1736, and end in the autumn of 1756, when he was in the North of England endeavouring to prevent a separation from the Established Church.

Charles Wesley was continually being urged to follow his brother's example in publishing his journal. Indeed, in 1749, in order to persuade Mr and Mrs Gwynne that financially he was an eligible suitor for their daughter's hand, he included his sermons and journals as literary property which he might eventually publish. Already he had been at pains to retain copies of most of his journals, even though in some cases greatly abbreviated. These were written up on numbered pages and bound into a thick octavo volume which was bequeathed to his widow with the charge to keep it in her personal possession. Dr John Whitehead published extracts from this document in his life of Charles. Eventually it was sold by Charles Wesley junior to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. At one stage it had been lost, but was discovered among some loose straw on the floor of the public warehouse where Charles Wesley junior had for a time stored his furniture. Unfortunately, the volume had suffered serious damage then or earlier: several leaves had been cut away from the binding, though not removed,

and other sections were completely missing. In effect the journal proper finishes on 31st August 1751, after which there are occasional fragments covering from a few days to a month each. Even the 'complete' sections of the journal, however, are very unequal, and a detailed description of one incident may be followed by a few days' complete silence.

This journal was published by Thomas Jackson in 1849, after he had used lengthy extracts in his biography of Charles Wesley. With all its defects, this or the later reprint remains the standard edition. Fifty years ago Nehemiah Curnock was working on an authoritative edition similar to that of *John Wesley's Journal*. John Telford entered into Curnock's labours and used some of Curnock's transcriptions of shorthand passages when in 1910 he published the first of three projected volumes of *The Journal of Charles Wesley*. This edition, though far from adequate, presents the standard text for the first two and a half years of the journal, in some ways the most important section of all.

Charles Wesley's letters are nothing like so numerous as those of his brother, and the unfamiliar handwriting, combined with the lack of signature or date, has undoubtedly led to the loss or neglect of many. The only attempt so far to publish them is that of Thomas Jackson, who appended 106 of them to the *Journal*. He made a valiant attempt to place these in chronological order, but in many cases was a long way off the target. John Telford, in his *Life of Charles Wesley* (pp.314-15), rearranged Jackson's selection in what was more nearly their chronological order, but still dated at least sixteen of them incorrectly. From this it will be gathered that Charles Wesley's less orderly habits as a correspondent have created problems almost unknown to the students of the letters of his brother John. Even with the extra evidence available through the amassing of transcripts of seven hundred letters of Charles Wesley, the present writer is still in some doubt about the dating of eighty of them, though in only eight cases has it not been possible to assign an approximate date. Much work remains to be done in tracing missing letters, in deciphering shorthand copies, and in piecing together sometimes flimsy clues to their date, before a really worthy standard edition of Charles Wesleys' letters can be ready for publication. Here, as in the case of the journal, however, the results will more than justify the immense labour involved. Both in journal and letters there is much of permanent value. This is perhaps particularly true of the letters, since two-thirds of them cover periods for which no journal is available. The first letter extant was written from Oxford to his brother John on their mother's birthday, 20th January 1727/8, and contains his first recorded verse. The last, dated 13th February 1788, is to a music-dealer about an overlooked account:

MR. WRIGHT,

If there is the least doubt, Mr Wesley always takes the safest, that is, his Neighbour's side, chusing to pay a Bill twice (or 20 times) rather than not at all.

In literary and historical values, journal and letters stand together. Both contain the occasional memorable saying. Such is the reply to his wife's complaint about her spiritual condition: 'Next to feeling Christ Present, the most desirable state is to *feel Christ absent*.'³ The Talmudic echo used for the Wesley memorial in Westminster Abbey comes from one of Charles Wesley's letters: 'God will look to that matter of Successors. He buries his workmen, &

still carries on his Work.'⁴ Touches of humour are frequent, as when he describes a night spent in the West Street Chapel, Seven Dials:

I lodged (rather than slept) at the Chappel-house. An old Woman's Hooping-Cough made me keep a Watchnight, ag[ains]t my will.⁵

Most of the humour has a caustic bite, as in his regular description of John Wesley's shrewish wife—'my best friend'—and a sentence written to his daughter Sally: 'Your studies are, I presume, as usual, directed by chance.'⁶ Charles Wesley's strong satirical vein, notably revealed in his controversial and political verse, is constantly exemplified in his prose:

I was sent for to baptize a child. It gave me occasion to speak upon faith. One of the company was full of self-righteousness. The rest were more patient of the truth, being only gross sinners.⁷

Like that master of brevity, his brother John, Charles Wesley practised a scrupulous economy in his use of words—witness a letter to John Nelson:

MY BROTHER,

You must watch and pray, labour and suffer. My spirit is with you. You will shortly be wanted in Yorkshire.

Farewell.⁸

This crispness of phrase lends vivid drama to many a longer narrative, of which there are (comparatively) many more in the journal of Charles than of John Wesley. One example is his account of a stormy journey from Bath to London in December 1748:

Fri. Morn. Soon after 4 set out in Thick Darkness & Rain. We had only one Shower; but it lasted from morning to Night. By half hour past 8 we got in sad plight to Caln[e]; set out in an hour, as wet as we came in, sore ag[ains]t my companion's Will, who did not understand me, when I told him, I never slack my pace for wind or weather. In a quarter of an Hour I was again wet to the skin, the wind driving the Rain in our faces so violently we c[ould] scarce sit ou[r] horses. It grew stronger & stronger, the nearer we came to the Downs. I foresaw the Trial approaching, & prepared for a Storm. It was ye fiercest I ever knew either by Land or by Sea. Before we had rode half a mile on the Summit of the Downs, the Wind took my Horse off his Legs, & blew me off his Back. I durst not mount again, the Beast was blown down so often. Forty times, I believe, I was overturned & born[e] to the ground. Never had I such a combat with ye Wind. It was labour indeed to bear up against it.

'No Foot of Earth unfought the Tempest gave!'

Many times it stopt me as if caught in a Man's arms; Once it blew me over a Bank, & drove me many yards out of the Road, before I c[ould] turn. For a Mile & an half I struggled on, till my Strength was quite spent, when I came to mount my weary beast. How we got 16 miles farther I cannot tell; for when we came to Hungerford there was scarce any Sense or Life in us. My Fellow traveller was only less wet & battered than me. We w[ould] have shifted our Cloaths, but our Linnen in ye Bags was in ye same Condition with ourselves. However we dried it in some time & changed. I almost lost the use of my Right Arm. It cost me all my Rhetoric to set my Companion out again. He rode on groaning so far as Newb[u]ry, ten miles from Hungerford, & then refused to stir a step further. I was forced to drop him & ride alone.⁹

Although Charles Wesley's prose (with the exception of his youthful sermons) merits a more prominent niche in general literature than it has received, its chief importance is historical. Occasionally a 'newsy' letter to his wife from London contains points of importance for the social or political historian. His accounts of the Gordon Riots furnish interesting evidence:

You read a very small Part of the mischief already done in the Papers. . . . B. Thackwray was an Eye-witness. He saw them drag the B[isho]p of Lincoln out of his coach, & force him to kneel down. They treated him unmercifully: began to pull the house down to w[hi]ch he fled for shelter: & were scarcely persuaded by the Owner (whose wife big with child was almost frighten[e]d to death) to let him escape at 11 at night.

Another B[isho]p wisely cried out 'Huzza, no Popery!' & was dismissed with Shoutings. . . .

Imagine the Terror of the poor Papists. I prayed with the Preachers at the Chapel & charged them to keep the peace. I preached Peace & Charity, the one true Religion; & prayed earnestly for the trembling persecuted Catholics. Never have I found such love for them, as on this occasion: &, I believe, most of the Society are likeminded.¹⁰

Thus he tried to think with Christian love of those whose principles he hated. With less success he tried to be impartial during the War of American Independence, advising Thomas Rankin, one of the preachers:

As to the public affairs, I wish you to be like-minded with me. I am of neither side, and yet of both; on the side of New England, and of Old. Private Christians are excused, exempted, privileged, to take no part in civil troubles. We love all, and pray for all, with a sincere and impartial love.¹¹

In the actual event, however, Charles Wesley was unable to preserve this desirable detachment, particularly when the question of American independence became inextricably linked with that of separation from the Church of England through his brother's ordinations for America.

Of far greater importance is the light thrown by Charles Wesley's journal and letters on the progress and the problems of Methodism. They are invaluable for their portrayal of bold experiments in evangelism, of conversions, persecution, tireless labours, harrowing anxieties and doubts, heartening success—records sometimes supplementary to other sources, sometimes unique. One early example is the account of the execution at Tyburn of ten criminals with whom Charles Wesley had been in frequent touch for some days:

I prayed first, then Sparks and Broughton. We had prayed before that our Lord would show there was a power superior to the fear of death. Newington had quite forgot his pain. They were all cheerful; full of comfort, peace, and triumph; assuredly persuaded Christ had died for them, and waited to receive them into paradise. Greenway was impatient to be with Christ. The Black had spied me coming out of the coach, and saluted me with his looks. As often as his eyes met mine, he smiled with the most composed, delightful countenance I ever saw. Read caught hold of my hand in a transport of joy. Newington seemed perfectly pleased. Hudson declared he was never better, or more at ease, in mind and body. None showed any natural terror of death: no fear, or crying, or tears. All expressed their desire of our following them to paradise. I never saw such calm triumph, such incredible indifference to dying. We sang several hymns; particularly,

*Behold the Saviour of mankind,
Nail'd to the shameful tree;*

and the hymn entitled, 'Faith in Christ', which concludes.

*A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
Into thy hands I fall:
Be thou my life, my righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all.*

We prayed Him, in earnest faith, to receive their spirits. I could do nothing but rejoice: kissed Newington and Hudson; took leave of each in particular. Mr Broughton bade them not be surprised when the cart should draw away. They cheerfully replied, they should not; expressed some concern how we should get back to our coach. We left them going to meet their Lord, ready for the Bridegroom. When the cart drew off, not one stirred, or struggled for life, but meekly gave up their spirits. Exactly at twelve they were turned off. I spoke a few suitable words to the crowd; and returned, full of peace and confidence in our friends' happiness. That hour under the gallows was the most blessed hour of my life.¹²

Nor is the value of Charles Wesley's testimony damaged by credulity or exaggeration. Indeed he himself (and apparently others) believed that it was John Wesley whose enthusiasms carried him away into credulity, to which Charles had to administer the cold douche of reasoned criticism. He was by no means so ready to countenance the many claimants to Christian Perfection, writing to Joseph Cownley:

One who is now called Perfect was at first called A soul in its first love. Strip y[ou]r correspondent of her enthusiasm, & she is neither more nor less than A believer living up to her privileges. My B[rother] will be convinced of this more & more. Trust him to God.¹³

About many of the revivalistic phenomena he was strongly critical, as is seen in the following account of the work at Newcastle in 1743:

Today one who came from the alehouse, drunk, was pleased to fall into a fit for my entertainment, and beat himself heartily. I thought it a pity to hinder him; so, instead of singing over him, as had been often done, we left him to recover at his leisure. Another, a girl, as she began her cry, I ordered to be carried out. Her convulsion was so violent, as to take away the use of her limbs, till they laid and left her without the door. Then immediately she found her legs, and walked off. Some very unstill sisters, who always took care to stand near me, and tried which should cry loudest, since I had them removed out of my sight, have been as quiet as lambs. The first night I preached here, half my words were lost through their outcries. Last night, before I began, I gave public notice, that whosoever cried so as to drown my voice, should, without any man's hurting or judging them, be gently carried to the farthest corner of the room. But my porters had no employment the whole night; yet the Lord was with us, mightily convincing of sin and righteousness.¹⁴

History has proved that Charles Wesley was also more clear-sighted than his brother in assessing the tendencies and eventual results of the rising status of the lay preachers, of the licensing of preachers and preaching-houses under the Toleration Act, and especially of John Wesley's ordinations. To John Nelson he wrote:

I think you are no Weathercock. What think *you* then of licensing yourself as a *Protestant Dissenter*, & baptizing & administering the Lord's Supper—& all the while calling y[ou]rself a Church of England-man? Is this honest? consistent? just? . . . John, I love thee from my heart: yet, rather than see thee a Dissenting minister, I wish to see the[e] smiling in thy Coffin.¹⁵

Whatever the rights or wrongs of the situation, Charles saw clearly whither the divine compulsion was leading Methodism, and continually challenged his all-but-idolised elder brother to halt the progress towards separation. Indeed it may be claimed that the letters of Charles Wesley furnish the largest unpublished source of information upon the separation of Methodism from the Church of England.

For some people the main value of Charles Wesley's letters and journal will be biographical, though we must not attempt to illustrate this aspect here. Certainly it is impossible to do him justice without using them fully. So many aspects of his life are illuminated therein—his youth, conversion, and early evangelistic labours, the genesis of some of his hymns, his marriage and family life, his relationships with great and humble, Methodist and non-Methodist, his untiring pastoral concern, his over-hasty judgements and his rapidly varying moods, and especially the transparent depths of his unaffected piety. And throughout all, even in the literary expression of his frequent moods of despair, there shine forth glimpses of the poet whose hymns did more than any literature except the Bible to express and to promulgate the evangelical message of the People called Methodists.

FRANK BAKER

¹ *John Wesley's Letters* (Standard Edition) V.16 (27th June 1766).

² Printed as Appendix III of John C. Bowmer's *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*.

³ MS. letter to his wife, 3rd January 1760 (Methodist Book Room).

⁴ MS. letter to James Hutton, 25th December 1773 (Moravian Archives, London).

⁵ MS. letter to his wife, 15th February [1759] (Methodist Book Room); cf. *Journal*, II.259.

⁶ MS. letter, 30th May 1780 (Methodist Book Room).

⁷ *Journal*, I.107 (15th June 1738).

⁸ Letter of (February 1746), published in Thomas Jackson's *Early Methodist Preachers*, I.144.

⁹ MS. letter to Sally Gwynne, 15th December [1748] (Methodist Book Room).

¹⁰ MS. letter to John Wesley [6th June 1780] (Methodist Book Room).

¹¹ 1st March 1775. [*John Wesley's Letters*], VI.143, &c.

¹² *Journal*, I.122-3 (19th July 1738).

¹³ MS. letter to Joseph Cowmley (Wesley's Chapel, London).

¹⁴ *Journal*, I.314 (4th June 1743).

¹⁵ MS. letter, 27th March 1760 (Methodist Book Room); cf. Jackson's *Life of Charles Wesley*, II.184-5.

BROTHERS CHARLES AND JOHN

THE partnership of John and Charles Wesley', said Mabel Brailsford, 'has passed into a legend, fixed for all time in the twin profiles of the medallion on the walls of Westminster Abbey.' We tend to forget, however, that there was a third brother, Samuel, the eldest of the family. What the partnership would have been like had Samuel survived into the golden age of the Methodist Revival we can only guess, but no assessment of the relationship between John and Charles can ignore the influence of Samuel upon them both. His seniority in years made him in some sense *in loco parentis* to his brothers; his liberality defrayed the cost of Charles's education both at Westminster and at Oxford until he became a King's Scholar in 1721; and, more important, he so impressed his own mind and personality upon his younger brothers that for fifty years after he was gone his dead hand lay heavily upon them both. Charles's rigid churchmanship, for instance, and John's desperate attempts to justify his ever-widening breach with orthodoxy, owed more to Samuel than we can know.

For all that, the fact remains that the Methodist Revival was the work of two brothers and not of three. It rarely happens that two brothers are alike, either in appearance, in temperament, or in gifts, and John and Charles Wesley were no exception to the rule. Being brothers, it would be strange if they had never quarrelled, even in the Lord's work, but in that work each was providentially complementary to the other, and each recognized the other's worth. In December 1753, when John was desperately ill, Charles, who was persuaded that his brother's time had come, told the Society at the Foundry that 'I neither could nor would stand in my brother's place . . . for I had neither a body, nor a mind, nor talents, nor grace, for it';¹ and in this modest disclaimer of personal ambition Charles does by implication esteem his brother's character and work. Similarly, when John came to write a memorial tribute to Charles in 1788, he stated that 'his least praise was his talent for poetry'.² Despite their many disagreements, some of which were fundamental and persistent, neither lost his true regard and affection for the other. 'I have a brother who is as my own soul', wrote John; and Charles referred to themselves as those 'whom God hath joined together'. Certainly this more than ordinary brotherly affection was more clearly manifest in the earlier than in the later years. Charles originated and organized the Holy Club, but handed over the leadership to John when the latter returned to Oxford; both formed Societies and together signed the first 'Rules'. The *Minutes* of the first Conferences were described as 'Conversations between the Rev. Mr Wesleys and Others', and various publications were often issued under both names. The 1780 *Collection of Hymns*, for instance, gave no indication as to which brother had written which hymns. On small matters they could differ and yet defer to each other. Charles for a time gave up tea-drinking out of respect for his brother's opinions; John disapproved of a special seat being reserved in their chapels for the Countess of Huntingdon, but said: 'On this point I yield to my brother's judgement'; and Charles, when asked by John to examine the classes at the Foundry, wrote in his *Journal* on 23rd May 1744: 'I took up my cross, to oblige my brother.' The evidence, we suggest, is abundantly sufficient to justify Charles's description of his brother as 'my last,

unalienable friend', and with that sentiment John would doubtless have heartily agreed.

And yet it would be surprising if there had been no points of difference between the two men. Charles was clearly out of sympathy, for example, with John's excessive credulity. He did not share his brother's belief in ghosts or witchcraft, and had no patience with John's constantly changing explanations of the swoons and trances and convulsions which often accompanied the early Methodist preaching, but roundly denounced these physical manifestations as 'no sign of grace, in my humble opinion'. In personal relationships Charles was over-cautious where John was over-charitable: John, he wrote, 'was born for the benefit of knaves'; and to Lady Huntingdon he spoke of 'that rashness and credulity of his, which has kept me in continual awe and bondage for many years'. He was also frequently disturbed by John's frankness and lack of reserve, and declared that John could not keep a secret: 'He never could since he was born. It is a gift which God did not give him.'

The likenesses and differences between the two brothers in temperament and character are seen most clearly, of course, in their partnership in their life's work. Both had experienced an evangelical conversion within a few days of each other after the same long spiritual struggle and search for truth; they shared a passionate belief in the efficacy of the gospel which they preached, and both possessed the burning desire of the evangelist to proclaim that gospel and to win souls; and though both of them were subject to frequent illnesses they were endowed with a physical stamina which enabled them to survive the early rough-riding days of the itinerancy, and a courage which could face without flinching the mobs at Wednesbury, Sheffield, and elsewhere.

Charles, like John, was a born preacher. His fame as a hymn-writer has obscured his prowess in the pulpit, where he was a giant second only in stature to George Whitefield; and though we may share the general regret that his health and the claims of family life caused his early retirement from the itinerancy, we must not forget that for twenty years he shared to the full the incessant preaching labours of his brother. From Hexham to Margate, from Penzance to Norwich, from Anglesey to Grimsby (to say nothing of Ireland), Charles knew the hardships—and the joys—of the itinerant preacher's life. As Dr Whitehead says:³

In fatigues, in danger, and in ministerial labours, he was, for many years, not inferior to his brother, and his sermons were generally more awakening and useful.

His memorial tablet in Wesley's Chapel pays tribute to the same sterling qualities: 'He was the first who received the name of Methodist; and, uniting with his brother, the Rev. John Wesley, in the plan of itinerant preaching, endured hardship, persecution, and disgrace, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.' At first he wrote and read his sermons, but he quickly developed into an effective extempore preacher; nowhere in his *Journal* do we find John's oft-repeated entry 'writ sermon'. Henry Moore said that Charles had a 'remarkable talent of uttering the most striking truths with simplicity, force, and brevity',⁴ though perhaps brevity was not always the most striking characteristic of his preaching, for it is on record that his sermons sometimes lasted for two and even three hours. His poetic genius and his emotional nature combined to give him a

power of vivid description and an intensity of personal appeal with which his brother's more logical turn of mind could not compare. A description of a sermon which Charles Wesley preached in the open air at Bristol in 1739 (only a year after his first extempore preaching) speaks for itself:⁵

Standing on a table in a field, the preacher, with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, prayed with uncommon fervour and fluency. He then preached about an hour in such a manner as I scarce ever heard any man preach. . . . I never heard any man discover such evident signs of a vehement desire, or labour so earnestly to convince his hearers, that they were all by nature in a sinful, lost, undone state. . . . And although he used no notes, nor had anything in his hand but a Bible, yet he delivered his thoughts in a rich, copious variety of expression, and with so much propriety, that I could not observe anything incoherent or inanimate through the whole performance.

John himself seems to have been aware of this difference in their preaching, for he wrote to his brother in 1766:⁶

Oh, insist everywhere on full redemption, receivable now by faith alone. You are made, as it were, for this very thing. Just here you are in your element. In connection I beat you; but in strong, short pointed sentences, you beat me. Go on, in your own way, what God has peculiarly called you to. Press the instantaneous blessings. Then I shall have more time for my peculiar calling, enforcing the gradual work.

But who should be better able to assess the relative qualities of the two brothers than the one who shared Charles's life for forty years? In 1816 Charles Wesley's widow published twelve of his sermons, and in a brief but charming introductory tribute to her husband, she wrote:

The character of the brothers was distinctly different. John was born with a temper which scarcely any injuries could provoke, ingratitude ruffle, or contradiction weary. This disposition peculiarly qualified him to govern; but he was so far from arrogating authority, or demanding submission, and his gentleness and forbearance rendered him so much the object of love amongst the people who placed themselves under his care, that they considered 'their sovereign pastor as a sovereign good'.

Charles was full of sensibility and fire, his patience and meekness were the effect of neither temperament nor reason, but of divine principle. John affectionately discharged the social duties but Charles seemed formed by nature to repose in the bosom of his family. Tender, indulgent, kind as a brother, a husband, a father, a master; warmly and unalienably devoted to his friends. The peculiar virtue of John was forgiveness of his enemies. He has been frequently known to receive into his confidence those who had betrayed it, and basely injured him. . . . Equally kind and generous was his brother, respecting enemies, and capable of an entire reconciliation; but he could not replace his confidence where he had experienced treachery. This formed some variation in their conduct. . . .⁷

Such an appraisal is both critical and eminently just.

The warm attachment and devoted partnership between John and Charles Wesley during more than seventy years was marred by only two major disagreements. The first concerned John's infatuation for Grace Murray. The story has been so often told, *ad nauseum* indeed, that it need not be recounted here. John Wesley's courtship of the widow Murray, with its doubts and vacillations and hesitations, provides one of the less-important chapters in his life-story. It is with Charles's part in the affair that we are here concerned. Whether his action in stealing a march upon his brother, and successfully

persuading Grace Murray to marry her other suitor, John Bennet, was justified, is a matter of opinion. Certainly John was deeply wounded and considered himself to have been 'double-crossed', and the Methodist Societies were faced with the prospect of a violent estrangement between the two brothers. There were indeed several distressing scenes between them; on their first meeting, Charles, beside himself with excitement, greeted his brother with the words: 'I renounce all intercourse with you but what I would have with a heathen man and a publican'. And though the words were scarcely uttered than they fell on each other's neck with tears, John's wounded pride could not so easily be healed. Charles, indeed, within a few months could write: 'George Whitefield, my brother, and I are at one, a threefold cord that shall no more be broken', but it was a long while before John could forget the part that his brother had played in this unhappy affair.

Different writers have taken a variety of views on Charles's conduct. Some, like Mrs Elsie Harrison, have no good word to say for Charles—'he was a thorn in Brother John's side to the end of the chapter'.⁸ Others, like Bishop Charles Wesley Flint, have found adequate justification for Charles's actions—'a twentieth-century American democrat feels sympathy with John and antipathy against Charles. But in eighteenth-century England Charles was more nearly right'.⁹ Certainly no impartial observer can impugn Charles's motives, and there can be no doubt that however unfortunate may have been his methods he was sincerely convinced that he was acting in the best interests alike of his brother and of Methodism. He knew his brother's weakness where women were concerned, and he believed that when John was infatuated he was capable of great folly. He feared that any marriage, especially one which involved a life's partnership with one so obviously John's inferior in social status and intellectual gifts, would be a disastrous hindrance to the work of God. Who shall say that he was wrong? For our present purpose it is enough to state that the deep friendship of these two men was strong and secure enough ultimately to triumph over the pain and bitterness of this temporary estrangement.

The second major disagreement between John and Charles concerned the relationship between Methodism and the Church of England. Nowhere do we see more clearly the fundamental cleavage in conviction and temperament between the two brothers than in their attitude towards this matter so important to the well-being of the Methodist Societies. Both loved and served the Church of England with equal ardour, but where Charles's churchmanship was rigid and uncompromising, John's was flexible and accommodating. It is doubtful whether John could see, until perhaps the very end of his life, whither his actions would eventually lead. Charles, on the other hand, could read the signs of the times, and was certain of the ultimate result.

As early as 1751 preachers and people were pressing for the administration of the sacrament in Methodist preaching-houses, and from that time until Charles's death the subject of the relationship of Methodism to the Church was a major preoccupation of the brothers' minds, and found a constant place in their mutual correspondence. At the 1751 Conference John and Charles, with four of the preachers, entered into an agreement that none of them would separate from the Church without the consent of all the others. Four years later, following a long discussion at the Leeds Conference and a further resolution against

'separation', Charles penned his famous lengthy 'Epistle' to his brother, which ended with the almost pathetic appeal:

*Partner of my reproach, who justly claim
The larger portion of the glorious shame,
My pattern in the work and cause Divine,
Say is thy heart as bigoted as mine?
Wilt thou with me in the old Church remain,
And share her weal or woe, her loss, her gain,
Spend in her service thy last drop of blood,
And die—to build the temple of our God?*¹⁰

Throughout the years that followed the very thought that his brother might take any step, however slight, which might lead the Methodists away from their allegiance to the Church was beyond endurance.

I never lost my dread of separation, or ceased to guard our societies against it. I frequently told them, 'I am your servant as long as you remain in the Church of England; but no longer. Should you forsake her, you would renounce me.'¹¹

It was John Wesley's ordination of three preachers for America in 1784 which brought matters to a head. Nothing that John ever said or did gave his brother so much offence as his ordination of Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey. Abstract and theoretical discussion about the apostolical succession was one thing; even such minor canonical irregularities as the licensing of preaching-houses, field-preaching, and the employment of lay preachers, could be condoned and even approved; but the ordinations were a practical and decisive step for which, in Charles's view, there could be no possible justification, and which could only lead to separation from the Church. No doubt Charles was influenced by his dislike of Coke, who had displaced him in John's counsels and confidence, and he probably feared the possible results of Coke's rashness and ambition when he returned to England, but these were minor considerations compared with his conviction of the fundamental irregularity of his brother's action and of its inevitable result. 'Ordination is separation', Lord Mansfield had told him.

This my brother does not and will not see; or that he has renounced the principles and practice of his whole life; that he has acted contrary to all his declarations, protestations, and writings, robbed his friends of their boasting, and left an indelible blot on his name, as long as it shall be remembered. Thus our partnership here is dissolved, but not our friendship.¹²

Happily, their partnership was not dissolved. The ties which had bound them for fifty years in apostolic service could not so easily be broken. The lengthy correspondence which passed between them during subsequent months clearly shows how earnestly each strove to convince the other and to maintain the common bond of loyalty. Neither was convinced, but as time went on Charles became less hostile. He continued to serve the London Societies with his customary devotion; and within a short time of his death he could write to John: 'Stand to your own proposal. Let us agree to differ.'

To which of these two brothers does Methodism owe the most? Is John to

have the pre-eminence—John, the great itinerant, with his fantastic record of miles travelled and sermons preached, and his amazing organizing ability, the impress of which has shaped Methodism for over two hundred years? Or Charles—the warm-hearted poetic genius, the ‘sweet singer of Methodism’, who set theology to music and gave an immortality to Methodism’s message beyond all the power of his brother’s calm, formal, reasoned sermons? This is a question which every generation will answer in its own way according to its own particular emphasis. But perhaps, after all, the memorial tablet in Westminster Abbey is most nearly right; for though one profile must necessarily be super-imposed upon the other at any given time, the features neither of John nor Charles are ever wholly obscured, but are plainly there for all in our modern Methodism to see and heed.

WESLEY F. SWIFT

¹ *Journal of Charles Wesley*, II.99.

² *Minutes of Conference*, 1788, p.205 (1862 edn.). The obituary notice was written by John.

³ Whitehead, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, I.292.

⁴ Moore, *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, II.372.

⁵ Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster, in *Methodist Magazine*, 1815, p.451.

⁶ *Letters of John Wesley*, V.16.

⁷ Quoted by F. Luke Wiseman in *Charles Wesley*, pp.229-30.

⁸ *Son to Susanna*, p.315.

⁹ *Charles Wesley and His Colleagues*, p.66.

¹⁰ *Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, VI.62.

¹¹ Thomas Jackson, *Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, II.391.

¹² *ibid.*, II.391.

CHARLES WESLEY'S POLITICS

CHARLES WESLEY was not a politician—much less a statesman. But from the earliest days of his evangelical ministry, he had been compelled to take notice of political issues. The Methodist Movement was scarcely out of its cradle when the Forty-five filled the nation with alarm. Rumours were rife; spy-scare was rampant; once again it was a case of *Christianos ad leones*. This new, strange sect of Methodists was regarded as Papists in disguise, in the pay of the Pretender. It culminated in Charles's being charged with treason at Wakefield on 15th March 1744, when a witness declared he had heard him pray that ‘the Lord would call home His banished ones’. Charles explained the spiritual sense of the words and declared that, so far from praying for the Pretender, Methodists ‘constantly pray for His Majesty King George by name’.¹ But Charles's own attitude to magistrates in this or any other case is summed up in his poem, ‘Written in going to Wakefield to answer a charge of Treason’:

*Gladly before rulers brought,
Free from trouble as from thought,
Let me Thee in them revere,
Own Thine awful minister.²*

As a good Anglican and Tory, he believed that both throne and magistrates were divinely appointed; loyalty to one's nation and king was at all times, for Charles, an essential part of religion. As Thomas Jackson says: 'The King he regarded as God's vice-gerent; and hence he obeyed the laws and supported the throne, not from worldly or selfish motives, but for conscience' sake.'³ Again, Jackson remarks of the two brothers; 'In this emergency of the national affairs [*sc.* the days before the Forty-five, when a French invasion was expected] they used all their influence in support of the reigning family. They inculcated loyalty wherever they preached; and in the principal societies under their care, they appointed weekly meetings of intercession with God for the maintenance of public tranquillity and of the Protestant constitution.'⁴ Thus in September 1745 he preached at Bristol on 'Fear God and honour the King'. If one feared God, he held, one could not but honour the King; to rebel against the King was to rebel against God. So when he receives news of the rebels' defeat, on 2nd May 1746, he quotes:

*All their strength o'erturn, o'erthrow,
Snap their spears, and break their swords;
Let the daring rebels know
The battle is the Lord's.⁵*

This attitude is reflected in his publications. The year 1744 saw *Hymns for Times of Trial and Persecution*, and twelve years later he published *Hymns for the Year 1756*. Three years later a renewed threat of invasion called forth a new hymn-pamphlet, *Hymns on the Expected Invasion, 1759*. Happily the French were defeated in a sea battle on 20th November by Admiral Hawke, and this called forth the *Hymns to be used on the Thanksgiving Day, November 29, 1759, and after it*.

What of these hymns? In the *Hymns for the Year 1756*, particularly for the *Fast Day, February 6*, there breathes a spirit of passionate patriotism. He writes:

*Lo! our all at stake we see,
All we prize or love below,
Peace, and life, and liberty,
Trifles to our sorest woe,
Still we bear an heavier load
Trembling for the ark of God.⁶*

and concludes the same hymn:

*Far away the aliens chase,
Save the land beloved by Thee,
Bless us, as in ancient days:
Peace, and true prosperity,
Gospel-righteousness restore,
Faith, and life for evermore.⁷*

At the time of the Gordon Riots in 1780, he wrote not only the satirical *Protestant Association* but the more serious and passionate *Hymns written in the Time of the Tumults, June 1780*. In one of these hymns, 'For the Magistrates', he expresses his conviction that the magistrates' authority derives from God:

*Thou, Lord of lords, and King of kings,
The eternal Potentate we own;
From Thee its Source dominion springs,
A stream that issues from Thy throne:
Thou hast ordain'd the powers that be,
Who govern by a grant from Thee.*

*To George in majesty supreme
We bow, as sitting on Thy seat,
To every ruler sent by him,
To every magistrate submit,
Whose delegated power is Thine,
Whose whole authority, Divine.⁸*

This doctrine is even more bluntly stated in a hitherto unpublished poem, found in a small quarto volume of manuscript hymns in the Methodist Book Room's archives, entitled *Hymns and Verses on Modern Patriotism, and the American Rebellion and Independancy, etc.; Miscellaneous Poems*:

*Who injure Kings their Lord defy,
And touch the apple of his eye.⁹*

Such were Charles Wesley's convictions on what we might almost call the divine right of kings. Such was his passionate love of the Crown—a love which, as is well known, was coupled with a passionate love of the Mitre. So closely are these bound together, in his view, that Dissenters and Republicans are for him one and the same thing. Another of the manuscript hymns is called 'The Loyalists in America'; in it appears the verse:

*As well may lambs with tigers dwell,
Water and fire may mix as well,
Darkness and light agree,
As Britain's loyal sons with Those
Who mitres hate, and kings oppose,
As Regicides and We.¹⁰*

Admittedly there were political dissenters in the eighteenth century—Joseph Priestley is perhaps the most obvious example—but for Charles Wesley Dissent and Republicanism, Dissent and Disloyalty to the Hanoverian succession, seem to be synonymous terms. This of course is sheer prejudice on his part, and can at times allow him to pen manifest absurdities, even in his published hymns. Thus in the *Hymns for the Nation in 1782*, he writes, referring to the Civil War:

*Thy providence reversed our doom,
When parricides the land o'er flow'd,
(Rebellious sects in league with Rome,)
And turn'd it to a field of blood.¹¹*

The suggestion that Cromwell and the Independents and Presbyterians were 'in league with Rome' is, of course, farcical. Charles himself faced no more farcical charge at Wakefield.

All this, of course, leads to the question: Was Charles at heart in love with the Stuarts rather than the House of Hanover? Certainly not. He prays in his hymns for King George and his Queen Charlotte by name, in one of them looking forward to the day when—

*all his subjects join
In George (thine Image) to revere
The Majesty divine.¹²*

On the other hand, there is in many poems, and elsewhere, a manifest sympathy for Charles I. Consequently, he objected to a censure in John's *History of England*, and wrote him on 29th December 1775: 'I must continue to plead for my namesake till you grant my request . . . Let Macauley [*sic*] and company call the King's murder, "This great act of national justice". Let Cromwell declare, "He could not be trusted", to palliate his own villainy. Let not your hand be upon him, or mine.'¹³ Charles's hymns and poems bear frequent reference to the Stuart King. The most obvious, of course, is the one *Written after passing by Whitehall*. He begins:

*Unhappy Charles, mistaken and misled,
In error by a wretched father bred,¹⁴*

and goes on to suggest that the King had attempted to right the nation's wrongs. In a manuscript poem,¹⁵ presumably written after the loss of the American colonies, the poet prays for the King:

*Late let him find his destined place,
And nearer view the King of kings,
Where Angels and Archangels gaze,
And wrap their faces in their wings;
Ineffably, supremely blest,
Exalted on a loftier throne
With martyr'd Charles in glory rest,
And reign with Christ for ever One!*

(One wonders if Charles Wesley used the prayer on January 30th for 'King Charles the Martyr'). And in another poem he speaks of 'Those that doomed their King to bleed'.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Jackson holds—rightly, without a doubt—that 'men more loyal to the House of Brunswick than . . . John and Charles never existed. All their influence through life they exerted on the side of the Protestant monarchy, which at some periods was in considerable danger.'¹⁷ The natural conclusion is that Charles Wesley was a Royalist, believing that God symbolized His own divine kingship by the kingship of earthly monarchs, and that it therefore behoved all Christians to be loyal to the throne, whoever occupied it at the time. Living as he did in the eighteenth century, he was a loyal supporter of the House of Hanover, and regarded Charles Edward Stuart with horror; but had he lived in the previous century, then he would have been

an equally loyal supporter of the House of Stuart. Cromwell he regarded with abhorrence; in *The Protestant Association* he tells how the rioters—

... roll with Oliverian sport
Their legislators in the dirt.¹⁸

And in another poem, not published in his lifetime, he concludes:

*Daring as Charles's spurious brood,
Harden'd as Wilkes in wickedness,
As dissolute as Fox, and lewd,
Worthy of the Protector's place;
Worthy the place by right his own
Where Cromwell fills a burning throne!*¹⁹

One would like to hear Mr Isaac Foot on his strictures on Cromwell!

Charles Wesley was, then, clearly a Tory, in the sense that he believed in the right of kings to govern personally; a constitutional monarchy meant nothing to him. The idea that others might know better than the king how to govern was unthinkable. Hence some of his bitterest irony was directed against those whom he designated 'demagogues'. 'Democracy', writes Thomas Jackson,²⁰ 'whatever name it may assume, Mr Charles Wesley could not endure.' In the 'Advice to the City', in *The Protestant Association*, he warned:

*Be caution'd then by good advice,
And learn your happiness to prize,
Your rage for liberty repress,
Nor turn it to licentiousness;
No more your gracious king mistrust,
So mild, and merciful, and just;
... And if you wish in peace to live,
No credence to your leaders give,
But every demagogue dismiss.*²¹

Since the City of London was opposed to the King's policy in America, it suffered under Wesley's pen:

*Come away to the Chase!—The Republican Pack
With a rabble of Livery-men at their back,
Have started the stag; and resolve to press on,
Till the bloodthirsty Hellhounds have hunted him down,
And worried to death, without mercy or pity,
To make a magnificent Feast for the City.*²²

He pictured the Commons as addressing the King:

*Vested in them [the Rabble] dominion see,
And bow to Legion's Majesty,
A servant of the people, know
Your Masters have ordain'd it so.*²³

Similarly Part I of a poem 'The Revolution', dealing with the popular sympathy with the insurgent Americans, ends:

*. . . When liberty unbounded reigns
And binds rebellious Kings in chains,
Till every humbled Monarch know
From whence his regal honors flow,
And prostrate in the dust adore
That awful original power;
Till subject to the Many's rule
The Royal Shade, the Fashion's Tool
Resigns his sceptre and his globe
And shouts For Ever live King Mob!²⁴*

It was not only 'the mob' whom Charles Wesley distrusted, and, indeed, loathed, but those whose strength in part derived from the fact that they had 'the mob' behind them. The leading 'liberals' of the day—Burke, Fox, and Wilkes—come in for repeated satire. How far this was due to their foreign policy, how far to their private character (Fox and Wilkes were notorious rakes), it would be difficult to assess. But time after time he pillories the three 'liberals', normally, as was the eighteenth-century custom, representing them by initials—a thin veil, for rhyme and rhythm reveal them:

*Does nothing treasonable lurk,
Nothing American, in ———?
No depths of Luciferian art
In F——'s foul, infernal heart?²⁵*

In the manuscript *Hymns and Verses on Modern Patriotism*, p. 108 has had a sheet of paper pasted over it—presumably by Charles's daughter Sally, who felt perhaps that discretion was the better part of valour. But Dr Frank Baker has succeeded in reading three epigrams on the obliterated page. The first runs:

*Clodius, inspir'd with fierce inveterate hate,
With furious faction shook his Roman state;
His Country to destroy was the design
Of daring, dark, atrocious Catiline,
But both assassins meet in F—— alone
And perfect wickedness is all his own²⁶*

and the second contains the lines;

*Behold in F—— no single fiend arise . . .
Malice and pride with lewd intemperance meet
And make th' infernal character compleat.²⁷*

These self-styled leaders of the people are, in fact, tyrants, who are traitors to their nation:

*Why do our factious Tyrants boast
Of colonies for ever lost. . . .²⁸*

And later, in the same poem:

*They thought it prudent to connive,
And let the daring Traitors live,
And suffer F—— his crimes t'avow,
Triumphant with a front like H.²⁹*

Another whom Charles Wesley flails is Shelburne, who in 1782 took office under Rockingham on condition that the King recognised the United States of America:

*Accurs'd by all, his memory shall rot,
Yet let the Wicked never be forgot,
But while the memory of the just is blest
Stand it in Britain's chronicles confest
That smooth, perfidious, perjur'd Sh. sold
His King, his Country, and his God for gold.³⁰*

So far a rather unfavourable picture has been painted; Wesley's violent prejudices undoubtedly impaired his political judgement. But politics are not only concerned with public events; they are concerned, too, with the public and moral issues of the day. And as one reads Charles Wesley's political writings, one is impressed by the fact that questions of public and national morals occupy him as much as—perhaps even more than—questions of national or royal prestige. So much is this so, that he regards the horrors that are being visited on the nation as being God's punishment for national sin. Thus at the renewed threat of a French invasion in 1759, Charles was concerned lest the people of England 'might have filled up the measure of their iniquities, and rendered themselves ripe for the divine vengeance';³¹ and his *Hymns on the Expected Invasion, 1759*, re-echo this concern:

*If justice stern hath pass'd
The irrevocable doom,
And arm'd with Britain's sins at last
The ravagers must come;

Come first, Thou Man in white,
Thy Father's love reveal,
His name on every mourner write,
And every servant seal.³²*

That is his constant concern. In a hitherto unpublished poem, 'The Associators', written, as its title implies, at the time of 'The Protestant Association' and the Gordon Riots, he proclaims that sin brings its own reward in national as in private life:

*So in our days a Gang we see
Link'd in a dark Conspiracy,
The Vessel of the State to make
A sure, but profitable wreck,
That while the waves our ship or'whelm,
Themselves may seize, and rule the Helm;
Nor do the desperate Wretches dream
The foundring Ship will bury Them.³³*

The instruments of God's anger will be chiefly France and Rome. This sort of phrase constantly occurs:

*The powers of persecuting Rome
Are all gone forth to kill and slay.*³⁴

France is 'our inveterate foe'; the friends in Britain of America are 'the friends of Gaul, and tools of hell';³⁵ and in the *Hymns for the Nation, in 1782*, he has one 'For the Conversion of the French', in which he says of them:

*Fraught with the policy of Rome,
By the old felon led, they come
To scatter, steal, and slay;
Brethren and countrymen divide,
While with gigantic steps they stride
To universal sway.*³⁶

Consequently his prayer is constantly that, if God permits invasion, He will spare the faithful; he thinks of the righteous in Sodom and the sign of blood on the doorposts of Egypt:

*The men, who daily sigh and grieve,
The Lots that in our Sodom live,
A difference in their favour make,
Into Thy kind protection take,
And claim the pensive souls for Thine,
And mark them with the crimson sign.*³⁷

But God *will* answer prayer; in spite of everything, he is sure the nation *will* be spared. And so, preaching in July 1759, he takes as his text Psalm 29¹⁰⁻¹¹. Similarly, in a typical Wesleyan verse, he writes in 1756:

*Yet forty days Thy justice cries,
And Nineveh shall be o'erthrown,
Except (Thy whispering grace replies)
They turn, before the wrath comes down.*³⁸

The moral issues that trouble Charles principally are corruption in high places (leading so often to what he regards as treachery for the sake of financial gain) and a national refusal to shew sympathy towards those Loyalists who after the peace of 1783 returned to the Motherland. Time after time he charges General Howe, the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the American War of Independence, with treachery, with being more concerned to feather his own nest than to win the war, with culpable dilatoriness, not to mention a shameful hostility towards the Loyalists; and his brother, Admiral Viscount Howe, comes in for the same condemnation. One cannot quote a tithe of the passages in which these charges are bluntly made—one whole, long poem, *The American War, under the Conduct of Sr. W.H.*, has Howe's misconduct in the War as its theme. The following are examples of the charges Wesley levels:

*But tho' he chasten'd them in measure,
He always did it . . . at his pleasure.
Why was not then the Contest ended?*

*Because it never was intended:
A sudden Period of their Quarrels
Had robb'd the Valiant of his lawrels;
The war concluded in a day
Had robb'd the Needy . . . of his pay.³⁹*

And the poem sums up Wesley's opinion of Howe thus:

*What now has our great Captain done?
. . . . Wasted our lives with wanton pleasure,
And twenty millions of our treasure:
His Sovereign basely disobeyed;
His trust perfidiously betray'd;
His Country sold; his duty slighted;
The Colonies with France united;
Made our amazing Efforts vain;
Imbroil'd us both with France and Spain;
Gain'd his own Party the ascendant,
And made AMERICA independent!⁴⁰*

These same charges are found time after time in the other manuscript poems. But what is more significant than these poems still existing only in manuscript, is the fact that similar opinions were published. The *Hymns for the Nation*, in 1782 contains the verse:

*By whom, O God, shall Britain rise?
Not by the ignoble slaves of vice
Who have their country sold,
Betray'd us in their prosperous hour
To raise a restless faction's power,
And glut their lust of gold.⁴¹*

And in the *Hymns for the National Fast*, Feb. 8, 1782, the lines occur:

*Thee the Christian-infidels
From Thy own world exclude . . .
Let but one his trust betray,
A sad reverse their legions know,
Yield, and waste, and sink away,
Before a conquer'd foe!⁴²*

and after 'exclude' and 'Let but one' is a reference to a footnote: 'Sir W. H.!!'

It will be asked, how far are these terrible accusations true? Were they simply the reactions of Charles Wesley's own violent prejudices, the reflexions of the gossip of the Tory clubs? Three considerations may be borne in mind. In the first place, the politicians and military men of the eighteenth century were in general notoriously lackadaisical and incompetent, not to say licentious. In the second place, both General Sir William Howe and his brother, Admiral Viscount Howe, were known not to agree with the policy of the Government towards the colonists. And in the third place, John Wesley, a far more balanced judge than his brother, published pamphlets on the conduct of both General and Admiral

Howe, and in measured language arrived at substantially the same conclusions⁴³—indeed, it is not unlikely that Charles Wesley penned some of his poems, especially *The American War*, after reading his brother's publications. These take Howe to task for his wilful refusal to avail himself of the services of the Loyalists in America; he refused them arms, and even permitted his soldiers to plunder and rape.⁴⁴ Charles Wesley deals with these themes in burning lines after burning lines:

*He lets his lawless soldiers loose
To rob, and plunder, and abuse,
Whose mercy no distinction knows
Of age or sex, of friends or foes:
Nothing their violence escapes:
They seize the subjects of their rapes,
While fathers, friends, and husbands see
The ruffians' foul brutality!*⁴⁵

The accusations were not, perhaps, after all, so wide of the mark.

Perhaps the most poignant lines, however, are those in condemnation of the treatment the Loyalists met with on their return to British shores:

*But who with open arms receives
The poor, the loyal Fugitives,
Or generous Pity shows?
The great will not incline their ear,
The Happy cannot stop, to hear
The Annals of our woes.*

*But if the aids of life we need
And want a place to lay our head;
The latest boon we crave
Our gracious King will not deny,
Our Country will the spot supply,
And hide us in the grave.*⁴⁶

And he was very bitter at the terms of peace finally agreed on:

*They force their Country to receive
A PEACE which only Hell could give
Which deadly feuds creates;
Murders, and massacres, and wars;
A peace which loyalty abhors
And each true Briton hates.*

*A peace which never could have been,
But as the Punishment of sin,
Of riot in excess,
Of foul concupiscence and pride,
Of crimes the great disdain to hide,
Of general wickedness.*⁴⁷

But Charles Wesley is on his soundest ground—and, incidentally, writes his finest poetry—when he leaves personal recrimination and speaks on the great human and moral issues. Like his brother, he loathed war, though it may be doubted whether he ever arrived as close to pacifism, the logical sequence of the Wesleys' teaching on Perfect Love, as his brother did⁴⁸; and we remember his great hymn 'All glory to God in the sky', as well as others in, for example, *Hymns for the National Fast*, Feb. 8, 1782, in which he looks forward to the day when the nations will 'learn Pernicious war no more'. Like his brother, he loathed Rome, its tenets and its machinations, and was broken-hearted when his son Samuel apostatized to Popery⁴⁹; but he felt deeply for individual Romanists who suffered in the Gordon Riots:

... With pity's softest eye behold
The sheep which are not of this fold,
The church in Babylon.

As sheep appointed to be slain,
By cruel, persecuting men,
By fierce, fanatic zeal;
By Christian wolves, reform'd in name,
Whose dire atrocious deeds proclaim
The synagogue of hell⁵⁰

and this sympathy led to Wesley's Chapel being threatened by the rioters.

Charles Wesley believed God had a special mission for Britain, but his love, like God's grace, extended to all; it reached all mankind:

When plagues the land o'erflow,
We share the common woe;
But our patriotic love
Is not selfish, nor confined,
But our yearning bowels move
Tow'rd the whole afflicted kind.

With every sufferer
We drop the generous tear,
(Whom Thy tendering Spirit leads,)
Pity no distinction knows,
Love for all the wounded bleeds,
Love embraces friends and foes.⁵¹

And on that note we may fittingly leave him.

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE

¹ Thomas Jackson, *Life of Charles Wesley* (London, 1841), I.376.

² *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1749) Vol. II, Hymn CLXXV, found in *Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (13 vols, London, 1868-72; henceforward referred to as WPW,) V.383.

³ Jackson, op. cit., II.468.

⁴ ib. I.359; cf. also pp.427-8.

⁵ ib. I.436.

⁶ op. cit., in WPW, VI.77.

⁷ ib. p.78.

⁸ op. cit., in WPW, VIII.278-9.

⁹ loc. cit., p.[71]. Some of these compositions have kindly been communicated to me by the Rev. Dr Frank Baker. I am engaged on an edition of the whole of Charles Wesley's hitherto unpublished poems.

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- 10 *ib.*, p.121.
11 *op. cit.*, in *WPW*, VIII.288.
12 *MS. Hymns and Verses*, p.34.
13 Jackson, *op. cit.*, II.304. John Wesley finally printed: 'He [Charles] was rigorously just; but is supposed to have been wanting in sincerity'.
14 *WPW*, VIII.445.
15 On a separate sheet of paper in the Book Room's archives.
16 *MS. Hymns and Verses*, p.141.
17 *op. cit.*, II.467.
18 *The Protestant Association*, in *WPW*, VIII.451.
19 *WPW*, VIII.482.
20 *op. cit.*, II.467.
21 found in *WPW*, VIII.474-5.
22 *MS. poem* in the Book Room on a loose sheet numbered '8'.
23 *ib.*, p.14.
24 *MS. Hymns and Verses*, p.66.
25 *The Protestant Association*, in *WPW*, VIII.466.
26 *loc. cit.*
27 *ib.*
28 *ib.*, p.112.
29 *ib.*, p. 113. 'H' is, of course, General Howe; see later.
30 *ib.*, p.98.
31 Jackson, *op. cit.* II.165.
32 *op. cit.*, in *WPW*, VI.151; cf. also similar phrases in *Hymns for the Year 1756*, in *WPW*, VI.79, and *WPW*, VIII.284.
33 *MS. Hymns and Verses*, pp.61-2.
34 *Hymns for the Year 1756*, in *WPW*, VI.84..
35 *Hymns for the National Fast, 1782*, in *WPW*, VIII.327.
36 *loc. cit.*, in *WPW*, VIII.300-1.
37 *Hymns for the Year 1756*, in *WPW*, VI.80.
38 *Hymns for the Year 1756*, in *WPW*, VI.78.
39 *op. cit.*, II.27-34.
40 *ib.* II.596, 606-15.
41 *loc. cit.*, in *WPW*, VIII.286.
42 *loc. cit.*, in *WPW*, VIII.328-9.
43 Cf. *An Account of the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies. Extracted from a late Author* (London, 1780); *Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion* (London, 1780); *An Extract from a Reply to the Observations of Lieut. Gen. Sir William Howe, on a Pamphlet entitled, Letters to a Nobleman* (London, 1781); *An Extract of a letter to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount H—e on his Naval Conduct in the American War* (London, 1781). Some of these, as their titles imply, are not John Wesley's own work.
44 Cf. *An Account of the Conduct of the War* (etc.), p.25.
45 *The American War*, II.75-82.
46 *The American Refugees* (loose *MS. hymns*), vv.3 and 6.
47 *Written On the Peace 1783*, *MS. Hymns and Verses*, pp.93-4.
48 Cf. John Wesley's wellknown passages on the horrors of War in his *Seasonable Address to the more serious Part of the Inhabitants of Great Britain* (*Works*, 1829 edn., XI.120-2), and his Sermon CXXX on 'National Sins and Miseries' (*ib.*, VII.404).
49 See the poems on this subject in *WPW*, VIII.422-7.; Samuel returned to Protestantism later.
50 *Hymns in the Times of the Tumults, June 1780*, in *WPW*, VIII.266.
51 *Hymns for the National Fast, Feb. 8, 1782*, in *WPW*, VIII.323-4.

BLAKE'S VISION AND IMAGINATION

A Bicentenary Appreciation

THE LUSTY singing of Blake's 'Jerusalem' in public gatherings is a good example of great art being enjoyed with very little understanding of its meaning. But then the significance of even his simplest verse is never on the surface, and Blake is the most difficult of English poets. His obscurity is due not only to his use of symbols, but to the infusion of his own mystical spirit into his verse. Nevertheless he is a very great poet, and regarded by many as greater than Wordsworth. And now that, as the result of years of intensive research, even his 'Prophetical Books' have yielded to interpretation, his influence on creative minds, already great, will be even more powerful. The best tribute that can be paid by a humble disciple on the occasion of the bicentenary of Blake's birth is to offer such suggestions as he can about the best way of approaching him as artist and poet.

This is not easy, but there are two words which, if understood as Blake used them, and if linked together, provide a clue that will lead in the right direction. They are Vision and Imagination. 'Vision' should not be confused with the popular notion of psychic experiments and phenomena, though Blake cannot be altogether absolved from complicity in such things; but so far as his art was concerned, it meant much the same thing to him as the word 'vision' applied to Shakespeare.

But whereas Shakespeare was concerned only with the natural world and natural man, Blake's view encompassed the spiritual world of Reality, sometimes revealed through the medium of the visible, but often, he said, obscured by it. It must not however be inferred that Blake's perception was the result of withdrawing from the world (he was very much in it); it was due rather to his possessing a secret power of piercing through its shell, of transcending it. Quite as much as any modern poet, Blake was under the necessity of transmuting the stuff of experience into something different—an art form.

An easier approach might be found through the study of an incident that occurred when Blake was very young. One spring morning when he was eight years of age and rambling in the countryside, he came upon a tree in a pretty garden in the neighbourhood of Peckham Rye. Suddenly he was brought to a stand, for its branches were bespangled with the bright wings of angels. He stood and gazed in ecstasy. Then he ran home to tell what he had seen, to be received with black looks, and only just to escape a thrashing through the intervention of his mother—no more sympathetic than her husband, but more kindly disposed to her fanciful child. The effect of this rebuff on the sensitive boy was to kindle the spirit of rebellion, an aspect of his character that was to become more pronounced when confronted by an hostile and ignorant world antipathetic to his Vision.

*O why was I born with a different face?
Why was I not born like the rest of my race?
When I look, each one starts; when I speak, I offend;
Then I'm silent and passive and lose every friend.*

The Peckham Rye episode calls attention to Blake's attitude to Nature. He boasted, 'I paint perfectly from Vision, others imperfectly from Nature.' He claimed to see 'through the eye'—as through a lens, 'not with it'—hence his various references to 'double vision'.

*For double the vision my eyes do see
And double vision is always with me.
With my inward eye 'tis an old man grey,
With my outward, a thistle across the way.*

Blake's knowledge and powers of observation were remarkable—witness his description of the dawn chorus of the birds, each bird named and the order of its singing given; also, the tender and beautiful account of the opening of wild flowers. Yet he was not a Nature mystic like St Francis, or even what is meant by a Nature-lover. He reproved Wordsworth and wrote in the margin of his copy of the preface to the *Excursion*—

Natural objects always did and now do weaken, deaden and obliterate Imagination in me. Wordsworth must know that what he writes Valuable is Not to be found in Nature.

Nevertheless, the life of the fields and open spaces provided him with a whole stock of symbols and images ready to rise up from his inner consciousness to meet his need at the moment of inspiration.

The young Blake sees a cherry tree in blossom, and lo! it is no longer a tree but the resting place of angelic messengers. Did he actually see these heavenly visitants? If so where did they come from? The answer surely is not far to seek. Blake was born in a Swedenborgian home, and until his marriage attended a Swedenborgian church. In both places he would learn all about angels. His mind was full of them.

The recourse to symbols begins at a very early age. Take, for example, the lovely lyric, composed when he was about fourteen years old, beginning—

*How sweet I roam'd from field to field
And tasted all the summer's pride
Till I the Prince of Love beheld . . .*

Simple enough and 'sweet'; but what should we make of—

*He caught me in his silken net
And shut me in his golden cage*

if we were not informed that 'silken net' represents the suave and treacherous device of conventional society to capture originality and inspiration and secure it fast in a cage? Turn next to the first poem in *Songs of Innocence*:

*Piping down the valleys wild
Piping songs of pleasant glee
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me*

Pipe a song about a Lamb

Who would have dreamed that Blake was doing anything more than singing a delightful dancing ditty for children? Yet a competent biographer informs us that 'in this poem he declared his divine appointment to write, for the child is at once Jesus and the Spirit of Poetry—a daring identification which later became the core of his metaphysics'.

*Little Lamb who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?*

We think we do, but perhaps feel that we are only at the stage of guess-work, for we know that this Lamb is no earthly creature frisking in English pastures. Similarly, Blake's 'Tiger' was never 'burning bright' behind the iron bars of any cage, nor was it ever shot between the eyes by any Big Game sportsman. This 'Tiger' appears again in 'The Proverbs of Hell' among 'the tigers of wrath', 'wiser than the horses of instruction' If it symbolizes energy, the terrible force of creative passion, we are still in doubt about the line—

*When the stars threw down their spears
And watered Heaven with their tears.*

But once we know that 'stars' are associated with Newton's bounded and mathematical solar system, and that 'forests' and 'night' represent superstitions and error and spiritual darkness, the idea of stars in a state of contrition is not so preposterous after all.

Songs of Innocence and *Songs of Experience* represent states in opposition. 'Without contraries', says Blake, 'there can be no progress'. To pass from childhood to manhood is to enter a life of struggle and tension which are only to be resolved on a higher plane. The biblical paradox 'the wrath of the lamb' is a hint of how opposites may be reconciled. It is of paramount importance to realize that all Blake's poems show deep humanitarian sympathies and have social and personal implications.

A good deal of his earlier verse stems from his ceaseless fight against the injustices and cruelties which result from maladjustments in personal relationships—parental tyranny, quarrels between man and wife, social cruelties such as acquiescence in the use of small children as chimney-sweeps, the spiritual damage of materialistic philosophies, the concealed brutality of hypocritical moralists blind to social justice and, in particular, the tyrannous exercise of authority by the Church and priests, and the whole spirit and temper of the Rationalism of his day. His constant fight against the denial of human rights and freedom taught him the cost of experience in waging spiritual warfare.

*What is the price of Experience? Do men buy it for a song, Or Wisdom for a dance
in the street? No! it is bought with the price
Of all that a man hath—his house, his wife, his children.*

When on occasions he speaks out plain and direct, naming the enemy, his sarcasm is biting—

*Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau
Mock on, mock on; 'tis all in vain.
You throw the sand against the wind
And the wind blows it back again.*

Taking up *The Collected Works of Blake*, we find only a bare fifth of the whole is taken up by poetry that can be read for pleasure; the rest is devoted to Didactic and Symbolical works, in both verse and prose. In the first portion, there is no one single compelling image to indicate the nature of Blake's religion, though the name of Jesus occurs frequently. But in mid-life, when Blake was about thirty-three (in 1796), the character of both his subject matter and style completely change. It is evident that during the composition of 'The Four Zoas' and 'Milton', he passed through the fires of a purifying and transforming spiritual experience. This was at the time when he was on the verge of destitution, a period of intense loneliness and mental suffering. But 'he kept the Divine Vision in the time of trouble' and the poem he composed in more tranquil moments, popularly called 'Jerusalem' (although written as a preface to 'Milton') and beginning with '*And didst those feet . . .*', was his triumph song in which we are often invited to join.

When, however, we look into the 'Prophetical Books', we enter a weird phantasmagoria, a shadowy underworld similar to Sheol, where half-formed figures pass to and fro and wrestle in strife. We hear the sound of crackling furnaces, the blowing of vast bellows at the forges and the clanging of great hammers on ringing anvils; and in this vast cavern under 'the mundane shell', we gaze at unreal and unearthly creatures with such names as *Los*, *Orc*, *Urizen*, *Luvah*, *Tharmas*, and their emanations *Enitharmon*, *Bromion* and *Palambron*, until we find ourselves asking, 'Did he who made the Lamb make these abortions? Whatever has happened to the author of "How sweet I roamed" and "Tiger, Tiger burning bright"?' Until a few years ago these works were taken as proof of Blake's madness. Not so today. It is now realized that he was wrestling with a great theme, the same theme as that attempted by Dante and Milton—nothing less than man's fall and man's recovery. And though it is generally agreed that in attempting the impossible his poetry suffered greatly, he has nevertheless added something very valuable to traditional Christianity. If a reader fails to discover what this is for himself, he has only to study some of the magnificent lines in selections from 'The Four Zoas', 'Milton', and 'Jerusalem', by John Sampson, in the Oxford Edition of Blake.

In order to deal with such a subject as the Fall and Redemption, Blake found it necessary not only to stretch a wide canvas but to invent his own mythology. In doing so he had to multiply symbols, many of them of his own creation. His use of blank verse for a work of such dimensions was inevitable, but here again Blake provided a literary framework of his own. The most original feature perhaps is that the characters in his trilogy are not men, but states of mind or parts of a person's mental make-up, and for their names Blake has not drawn upon the Bible or the nomenclature of antiquity, but made coinages of his own; thus Inspiration is baptized as *Los*, Reason as *Urizen*, Love as *Luvah*, Earthly passion as *Tharmas*, and so forth. The struggle between the members of the body, as Paul described them, becomes in Blake a conflict between personified mental states.

The chief contestants are *Urizen* and *Los* (sometimes called *Orc*). Blake expresses his hatred of Reason in his earliest verse. In 'Jerusalem' he calls it 'a murderer'—

*Of every Divine Member: it is the Reasoning Power,
An Abstract objecting power that Negatives everything.
This is the Spectre of Man, the Holy Reasoning Power,
And in its Holiness is closed the Abomination of Desolation.*

The violence of Blake's attack on the enemy which he nicknamed *Urizen* might be explained as a revolt against all the evils of the age of Reason, all the rationalistic tendencies that destroyed spiritual freedom. But the root cause of his enmity must be sought deeper. Urizen as the cold cynical and powerful spirit was the Destroyer of Humanity. Blake did not intend to set one faculty against another, certainly not to destroy Reason, but only to dislodge it from its usurped throne as the lord and master of life. Reason may hold the reins, but it cannot move the chariot one inch. The motor-power that enables a man to feel and act, moves him to indignation or to love and sacrifice, issues spontaneously from some deep well-spring of life.

Blake's preoccupation with man's basic psyche compelled him to consider the fact and power of sex. He did not, like D. H. Lawrence, attempt to make marriage with the right mate a religion or a philosophy of life; but he did regard an honest attitude to sex as evidence of man's ethical integrity and realism. He believed, as did Coventry Patmore later, that it was a subject suitable for poetic treatment. He disagreed fundamentally with Milton about sexual relationships, in spite of his admiration for the great Puritan writer, of whom he regarded himself as the re-incarnation. Milton sought to end his frustration in marriage and had three wives. He signally failed in these adventures, but it never occurred to him that it might be himself who was at fault and not his wives. As a result of his misfortunes, Milton, by 'a monstrous inversion', makes passion responsible for the Fall, so that in *Paradise Lost* it is 'Reason the restrainer who governs or should govern the Universe'.¹ Blake, who in his early married life was seriously confronted with the problem of incompatibility (his wife Catherine was a simple uneducated country woman), was able in a short time to resolve the tension into harmony. As a result, far from defaming natural and legitimate desire, he exalted it, and regarded instinctive emotions as the power which, rightly directed, enabled man to fulfil himself.

It is only to be expected that the ignition point where life quickens into flame should be regarded by Blake as the focal point where inspiration takes fire; for who, when first falling in love does not become lyrical? But to inform the general reader that—

A poet, a painter, a musician and architect: the man or woman who is not of these is not a Christian,

is to ask to be misunderstood. Blake, however, did not write for the prosaically literally-minded public. By saying that a Christian must be an artist he means that he must have received the Holy Ghost, and that his life therefore is lived in the 'Creative Spirit' by whom the universe and all things were made. For those who might miss this meaning, he said quite plainly, 'the unproductive man is not a Christian'.

Though Blake might seem to be completely obsessed with the disunity of mankind and with the internal strife of the individual man, this was only for a

period. His consistent search was for the perfectly integrated man or, more strictly, for that unity and harmony which are only to be found in the Godhead. The Vision he saw was not the God of eighteenth-century Deism, not any angel form like that he saw in childhood, not any cold abstract Absolute of Plotinus; it was a man like unto himself but perfect—the true Humanity. Sometimes an image seems to be forming itself into a shape that can be recognized, as in 'The Four Zoas'—

*Then the Divine Vision like a silent Sun appear'd above
Albion's dark rocks . . .*

. . . and in the sun a Human Form appear'd.

Sometimes its long shadow is adumbrated and suggested as in such striking lines as—

*Mutual in one another's love . . . we behold
As One Man all the universal Family, and that One Man
We call Jesus the Christ; and he in us, and we in him
Live in perfect harmony in Eden, the land of life,
Giving and receiving, and forgiving each other's trespasses.*

But the nearest to a crystallization into a definite image is to be found in an impassioned lyrical utterance written to his friend, William Butts, from the yellow sands at Felfham. It is far too long to quote, but the image is in the form of the Divine Man embracing all things: 'each grain of sand', every stone, rock, herb, tree, star, wave of the sea—all are seen included, transformed and transfigured in the unity of this vision.

*Till the Jewels of Light,
Heavenly Men beaming bright,
Appear'd as One Man.*

But how is fragmentary man to behold the Divine man in his unity; how is he to become one with perfect unified life? How is the visionary to become the Vision? The answer, if we can find it, will help to define Blake's use of Imagination and to justify it. There is nothing subtle or far-fetched in the combination of Vision and Imagination. Vision presents an image to the inner eye, and an image requires an imaginer. A very important and original aspect in Blake's teaching is that he has no use for the idea of any one separate organ or faculty as the organ for apprehending Reality. He would not agree with either Coleridge or Wordsworth in regarding Imagination as 'the mind's ambassador to Infinity' i.e. as something set apart for perceiving, like the eye for seeing. It is man all alive who becomes Imagination. In order to see God, man must become other than he is. His broken and disorganized being must be unified. Therefore what is needed is for man to be rebuilt, or fused together in all his parts. His life as a whole must go forth to meet that Life which is life indeed.

'God becomes as we are, that we may be as He is.' But 'Man is born a Spectre, or Satan, and is altogether Evil, and requires a new Selfhood continually and must continually be changed into his direct Contrary'. How familiar, how orthodox, that sounds! The vision of Blake was his own personal idiosyncratic discovery of essential Christianity. It convinced him as being true, because it

was a reality of his innermost consciousness, a truth which he had himself in some measure become. The predominating image of his Vision was the divine-humanity, Jesus Christ, which daily became more clear and compelling in the kind of daily experience he was willing to buy at a great price, and the selfless dedication of his gifts to the glory of God alone. Continuing obedience to the divine Vision called for daily acts of 'self annihilation', the perpetual forgiveness of his sins that was conditional upon his forgiving others, and the practice of the spirit of Love that makes for fellowship and is proven by service and loving kindness. This, Blake realized, was the only life of liberty.

Blake added nothing new to Truth, but he saw it more clearly than most men. He thought that Christianity as a creative life was best illustrated by the selfless devotion of poets and artists in their endeavour to discover and express reality, but we are indebted to him most for his recognition that Christ came to bring into being a higher order of humanity. That he himself was one of that higher order is suggested by the remark of a young man introduced to the artist when an old man; he described him as 'a new kind of man' an impression likely to be made on those who come to Blake without preconceptions and prejudices.

*Trembling I sit day and night, my friends astonish'd at me,
Yet they forget my wanderings. I rest not from my great task!
To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes
Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought, into Eternity
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination.
O Saviour pour upon me thy Spirit of meekness and love
Annihilate the Selfhood in me: be thou all my life.*

J. HENRY BODGENER

¹ *English Blake*, Bernard Blackstone.

HEALING IN THE EARLY CHURCH

II

III. WHAT CHRISTIANS CLAIMED FOR THEIR OWN HEALING

CHRISTIANS of the early centuries set great store by the apostolic miracles of healing. For example, the *Clementine Recognitions*, which may be described as a historical novel, developed in the second and third centuries, represent St Peter as telling his hearers:

At this moment your sins may be washed away in the water of the spring, the river, the sea, with invocation of the threefold Name, so that, not only may evil spirits be put to flight, but you, with sins forgiven and faith entire, and complete purity of mind, may drive evil spirits and demons out of others and be able to free them from suffering and weakness (*Clementine Recognitions*, vii, 32).

The *Clementine Homilies*, fiction of the same period, also say that the convert should share in this work of healing. In this book, St Peter ends almost every sermon with an after-meeting, where he lays hands on the sick, prays, and heals them (vii 12, viii 24, ix 23, x 26, xi 36, xv 11, xvi 21, xviii 23, xix 25).

The third-century Edessene tradition which Eusebius found—alas, also fiction!—tells of our Lord sending Thaddaeus to Abgar King of Edessa:

Thaddaeus began in the power of God to heal every disease and illness. . . . And he said to King Abgar, 'I place my hand upon you in His name.' . . . And Abgar was amazed that now he experienced in fact through His disciple Thaddaeus just as he had heard of Jesus, for he cured him without drugs or herbs. And not him only, but one Abdos-ben-Abdos, who had the gout. He came and fell at his feet, and receiving prayers at his hand was healed (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, i, 13).

The third-century *Apostolic Constitutions* make the Apostles say:

These gifts were first bestowed on us the Apostles as we were about to preach the gospel to every creature, and afterwards they were necessarily provided to those who through us had believed, not just to benefit the possessed, but that those whom the word did not persuade, the power of the signs might dazzle (viii, 1).

Such is the early Church's view of the apostolic mission. The question arises: Did healing continue to be so prominent in the second- and third-century Church? Taken by themselves, these writings of that period cannot be regarded as evidence of such continuance.

However, there is other evidence that 'miracles' of healing did continue. Tertullian of Carthage (c. 190) says so:

The very lawyers have received benefits from Christians. The clerk of one was freed from a demon, the relative of another, the little boy of a third, and how many men of rank—I make no mention of the lower classes—have found healing from devils and illnesses. The Emperor Severus was cured after being anointed by a Christian steward named Proculus (*Ad Scapulam*, 4).

Tertullian includes exorcism, along with prayer, Bible-reading, and hymn-singing, as a normal activity for the ordinary Christian. Tertullian, we must own, did set extraordinary standards for the ordinary Christian.

However, Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons (177 on) is less of an extremist, and he boldly makes this claim:

Even the raising of the dead has often been done in the brotherhood, in cases of dire need, the whole of the local church beseeching, with much fasting and supplications. The spirit of him who had departed has returned. The man has been granted to the prayers of the saints. . . .

Some do, really and truly, cast out demons, so that those who have been cleansed from evil spirits often believe and are in the church. . . . What is more, as I have said, the dead have been raised and remained with us for a considerable number of years. What more? It is impossible to mention the number of gifts (*charismata*) which throughout the whole world the Church has received from God in the name of Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate. Nor does the Church do anything by angelic invocations, nor incantations, nor other perverse meddling. It directs prayers in a manner clean, pure and open, to the Lord who made all things, and calls upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Against Heresies*, ii, 31, 32).

Justin, writing from Rome slightly earlier (c. 150), uses surprisingly similar words in making the same claim:

Many devil-possessed all over the world, and in your own city, many of our men, the Christians, have exorcised in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate. When all other exorcists and sayers of charms and sellers of drugs failed, they have healed them, and still do heal, sapping the power of the demons who hold men, and driving them out (*Second Apology*, 6).

In the name of this same Son of God, firstborn of every creature, who was born of a Virgin, and became man subject to suffering, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate . . . and died, and rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, every demon exorcised is conquered and subdued (*Dialogue with Trypho*, 85).

It will be noticed that Justin and Irenaeus (as Origen in the quotation from him which is to follow) imply that healing in the name of Christ needs also recital of the faith concerning him. Here, in this context, is one of the earliest signs of the emergence of the Creed. Origen (248) adds this testimony from Palestinian Caesarea:

Some there are who show signs of having received through this Faith something the more incredible. I mean by the cures which they perform, calling upon nought else over those who need their healing than the God who is over all, and the name of Jesus, along with the account concerning Him. For by these means we ourselves have seen many set free from grievous symptoms and distractions and madness, and ten thousand things beside, which neither men nor demons had cured.

Not a few Christians exorcise sufferers, and that without manipulations and magic or the use of drugs, but just by prayer and invocation of the simpler kind, and such means as the simpler kind of man may be able to use, for it is mostly people quite uneducated who do this work (*Contra Celsum*, iii, 24: vii, 4).

Origen's contemporary, Cyprian, later to become Bishop of Carthage, writes this in one of his earliest letters after his baptism, 246:

What ability we have is from God, everything I say from God. In Him we live, by Him we prevail, from Him we have knowledge of the future . . . and ability to quench the virulence of poisons for cure of the sick, to purge the stains of foolish souls by return to health, to those molested giving peace, to the violent calm, to the fierce gentleness, by driving out the unclean roving spirits which plunge upon men for their undoing (*To Donatus*, 4f.).

The exorcised, he says in another passage:

freed from unclean spirits, live in the church, in praise and honour, advancing in heavenly grace, and growing in faith (*Epistle* 76).

Lactantius, in the early fourth century, gives a similar picture,

Like Christ Himself, His followers in their Master's name, and by the token of His passion,¹ drive unclean spirits out of men. . . . When they have been driven out, all those restored to health cleave to that religion, the power of which they have experienced) (*Divine Institutes*, iv, 27; v, 23).

Thus healing, spectacular enough to be claimed as a continuance of that miraculous accompaniment to the Apostolic preaching, is known in the second, third, and fourth centuries, especially (though not quite exclusively) healing which is the driving out of demons.

Such healing is, by most, associated with men of special gifts² or of outstanding spiritual power. Tertullian is the only one I know who would quarrel with this statement. Origen says that, apart from miracles, there might have been no conversions in the Apostolic Age. He implies that miracles may be fewer in his time, the middle of the third century, because no longer so necessary as evidences. We need not accept his opinion. Origen may be nearer to the Apostles by 1,700 years, but that does not necessarily mean that he knew more about them than we do. There are, he says, even now—

some who charm away demons, perform many cures, and perceive certain things about the future, according to the will of the Logos (*Contra Celsum* i, 46).

In another place he claims that these miracles do remain to a considerable degree, and indeed our Lord's promise about 'greater works than these' (John 14₁₂) has been fulfilled in the healing of those spiritually blind and deaf and lame, moral reformation on a scale unknown in the narrower field of the Lord's earthly ministry.³

One of the best examples of miracle continuing is Origen's favourite student, Gregory. He owed his soul to Origen. Gregory, from one of the leading families of Pontus, intended to go to Beirut for further study, but passing through Palestine, heard of the master newly established in Caesarea, so came to sit at his feet. He found more than he had sought. He himself says: 'I had one passion—religion, and this godlike man master therein.' Instead of entering the imperial service, as he had meant, Gregory became missionary Bishop in Pontus. It was under him that the first mass movement in Christian history took place. Because of his extraordinary powers, this truly apostolic figure was called *Thaumaturgos*, 'Wonderworker'. This is a vivid picture of him at work:

At daybreak the crowd would again be at the doors, men, women, and children, those suffering from demon possession, or other afflictions or illnesses of the body. And he in the midst would, in the power of the Spirit, apportion as befitted the need of each of those who had come together. He would preach, he would join an enquiry, he would advise, he would teach, he would heal. It was above all for this that he drew the numbers to the preaching, that sight corresponded with hearing, and that it was through both sight and hearing that the tokens of the divine power shone forth upon him. For his discourse would astonish their hearing, and his wonders among the sick their sight. The mourner used to be cheered, the youth be taught self-control, the aged be tended with fitting words. Slaves were taught to act dutifully towards masters, those in authority to be kind to men under them, the poor that virtue is the one wealth, the property which all are in a position to have a chance at. The rich man was urged to have a care for others, and that he was the steward of possessions rather than the owner of them' (Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Gregory Thaumaturgos*).

Here we see a busy pastoral ministry, in which, along with comfort and spiritual direction, healing has its place.

Similar examples may be found among ascetics, greatest of whom was Antony (born 250), a younger contemporary of Gregory. Because of their special sanctity, hermits in the desert were sought by those in need. They were looked to as exorcists and healers, and also (like the oracles among the heathen) as men able to discern the future through their being so close to God. Antony is said on one occasion to have replied to an army officer, asking for the life of his son, 'Ask not of me—ask of God in Christ, and the child shall be healed.' Acknowledging all to be of God, he does dare to speak oracularly.⁴ This association of continuing miracle with men of special gifts or of special sanctity leads to the next point, the healing power of relics of the saints.

The triumph of the Church in the Roman Empire from 312 onwards brought a situation new in two respects. First, there were no more martyrs: and, second, mass conversion of pagans meant that much of pagan mentality flowed into the Church. Both new factors connect with our subject. Having associated healing miracles with the specially holy, who were so holy as the martyrs of the heroic period now past? And, still retaining ideas of magic and of charms, how easy, how inevitable, to look to the martyrs' relics! Julian the Apostate had something of right on his side when he bitterly remarked that pickled heads and mouldy bones were become the new gods of the Roman people. Yet one can hardly regard it as all superstition if the tomb of a martyr made a place numinous for Basil or Chrysostom, for Ambrose or Augustine. Here was witness to Christ, like that of the Creed, like that of the Cross. The relics of the saints did lead to gross superstition for the half-converted multitude. They continued to do so throughout the Middle Ages. Where medieval conditions prevail, they do so still today.

In the last book of *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine discusses the question of continuing miracles of healing. He places them in two classes: those accompanying the sacraments of the Church, and those due to commemoration of, or to the prayers of, the saints. Are miracles fewer than in the glorious past? Augustine wisely says that whereas miracles recorded in the Scriptures are noised abroad among all nations, modern cases are only locally known. He recounts eighteen cases of miraculous cures known to him, says that at Hippo there are

seventy more records connected with a shrine only two years old, in Calama many more, and at Uzalís there ought to have been more still, but no records were kept.

'So there are still many miracles, God working them by whom and through what means He wills, even the same God who worked those of which we read in Scripture' (*De Civitate Dei*, xxii, 21).

Meanwhile, a less spectacular Christian service of the sick continued and developed. Dionysius Bishop of Alexandria tells of an outbreak of plague just before Easter in the year 263. Christians before this, he says, had had trials of their own:

First they drove us out. And alone, persecuted by all and put to death, we kept the Feast even then. And every place of affliction became a festive spot—field, desert, ship, inn, prison. But gladdest of all the perfected martyrs, who kept the Feast in Heaven. Next came war and famine, which we endured along with the heathen. Shortly after, this plague was upon us. The heathen thrust away those who caught the disease. They forsook their dearest, and put them out on the street before they were dead. Corpses they dumped, unburied. They shrank from any part or lot with death. Most of our brethren were unsparing in extremes of love and brotherhood. They held fast to each other, and the sick they tended without precaution. . . . serving them in Christ. And most readily they perished with them, infected by the affliction of others' (Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History*, vii, 22).

A century later we have testimony of another kind. The Emperor Julian, seeking to undo his uncle Constantine's work and to reinstate paganism, tried also to reform the temples and their priesthood. In this regard he has much to say of the good works of Christians for those in need.⁵ He complains to the priests—it seems that wives of the pagan priests go to the Eucharist!

None of the Jews beg, and the impious Galileans relieve their poor and ours. . . . Every one of you allows his wife to carry stuff out of the house to the Christians. They feed their poor at your expense, while you are careless and no one in need applies to you.

And so he comes to the remedy:

Erect hospitals in every city, that strangers may partake of our benevolence, and not only those of our own religion but others also.

'Hospital' here, of course, is more of a poor-house than a place of healing, but care of the sick was part of the Church's organized charity. Nowhere is this more strikingly seen than in the monastic establishments set up by Basil of Caesarea (in Cappadocia). Basil had been fellow-student with Julian at Athens, and when Julian assumed the purple he invited Basil to court. Basil was to become not a courtier of the Apostate's, but Bishop and saint, the greatest figure in early Greek monasticism and the propounder of its rule, with service of others at that Rule's very heart:

Whose feet wilt thou wash, whom wilt thou serve, how shalt thou be last of all, if thou art alone?

As Metropolitan, Basil founded many institutions for the relief of the needy, those in Caesarea itself including workshops where the poor might learn a trade and a hospital which provided even for the tending of the leper. The buildings were so extensive that they were spoken of locally as 'New Town'—and this, remember, in the first half-century of the Church's becoming a fully legal property-owning society. Thenceforth such service was to become a recognized part of monastic institutions in both east and west.

To sum up this section is to sum up the whole essay:

1. Healing is universally associated with Christianity's classic period, the apostolic age.
2. It is claimed that healing miracles continue; everybody has firsthand experience of such, most frequently related to exorcism.
3. Yet healing seems to be exceptional, associated with special gifts or special sanctity, and one is led to ask if this were not really the case from the beginning.
4. A fresh reserve of such miraculous power is found in the martyrs of the heroic period, one side of this development belonging to worthy veneration of the saints, and another to unworthy continuance of pre-Christian resort to charms.
5. Care for the sick—something apart from these exceptional cures—is characteristic of Christians from the earliest times, and comes to new prominence in the wider opportunities of the Imperial State Church.

JOHN FOSTER

¹ The cross. Cf. the earlier passages and their reference to the passion, 'crucified under Pontius Pilate'. The cross, Lactantius says, is a terror to evil spirits.

² 'An exorcist is not ordained . . . for he who has received the gift of healing is declared by revelation from God, the grace which is his being manifest to all' (*Apostolic Constitutions*, viii, 26).

³ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, ii, 48.

⁴ The mother of Theodoret was, before his birth (c. 390), cured of an eye complaint by a holy man who lived among the tombs, and another ascetic later assured her of an end to her barrenness if she undertook to dedicate her future child to God—hence his name, Theodoret. Healing and oracular speech here again are closely associated.

⁵ See footnote 2, page 222, *LQR* July 1957.

PRIESTHOOD AND MINISTRY

Part II

BUT what, then, it may be asked, is the place and function of the ordained Ministry in a reformed and evangelical Church? And what is its relation to the universal priesthood?

In answer to these questions, the first thing to notice is that just as all Christians are priests, so all have a ministry, a service, to fulfil. Everyone has a part to play in the common priestly service of declaring the wonderful deeds of God to men and offering spiritual sacrifices to God on their behalf. But not everyone can or ought to do this in one and the same way. There is a diversity of service according to the diversity of gifts that men possess (1 Cor. 12^{4ff.}, 28^{ff.}; Eph. 4^{11ff.}; 1 Pet. 4^{10f.}). It is true that as members of the Body of Christ we all share alike in its priestly character, and through Christ as our one Mediator we all alike have entirely free and open access to God (Rom. 5²; Eph. 2¹⁸; Heb. 4¹⁰, 10¹⁹; 1 Pet. 3¹⁸). But precisely as members of the Body, we are and must be diverse in function and service (1 Cor. 12¹²⁻³⁰). There is only one priesthood but there are many ministries or forms of service.

The different forms of ministry, moreover, are not all of equal importance, and there is one in particular on which it must be said that all the rest depend. In the New Testament, where the variety of ministries is amply illustrated, it is noteworthy, first, that all of them are regarded as gifts of God and of Christ, intended 'for the perfecting of the saints . . . unto the building up of the Body of Christ' (Eph. 4¹²). But secondly, where these ministries are listed, a certain order of precedence is observed: apostles and prophets head the list (1 Cor. 12²⁸; Eph. 2²⁰, 4¹¹). This is understandable, since apostles and prophets are specifically charged with the ministry of the Word, and it is on this ministry that all else depends. The ministry of the Word can well be called the one essential or fundamental (cf. Eph. 2²⁰) ministry, since without it there would be no saints to perfect, no Body of Christ to build up, as but a little reflection will show. For what Body of Christ, what Church, would there have been in Corinth, for example, without the apostolic preaching of the Word? Or what Church would there be today in Africa—or, for that matter, in Britain—if there had been no preaching of that same Word?

By the ministry of the Word, however, is meant in the first instance the ministry of Christ himself, the Incarnate Word. Christ is the first and supreme Minister; He is the Son of Man who 'came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many'; He is the Good Shepherd, the *Bonus Pastor*, who gives His life for the sheep. To this end He comes from God, is sent by God; and it is His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him (John 4³⁴, 6³⁸). This is a point that should be particularly emphasized: Christ is the servant of men, not as if men were His masters, but because He is the Servant of the Lord; and therefore His service of men consists, not in doing their will, but His heavenly Father's. Hence, in all His ministering and serving He speaks and acts with authority. He is 'a prophet mighty in word and deed' (Luke 24¹⁹), at whose authority men exclaim with astonishment (Mark 1²², 27; Matt. 7²⁸; Luke 4³⁶). And when they ask Him where He gets it from—since authority is

not something that just 'happens', but must come from some source or other, human or divine—it is made plain that we must understand His authority to come from God (Mark 11₂₈₋₃₃).

But our Lord, even in the days of His flesh, does not exercise His ministerial authority alone, by Himself. He confers similar authority on others, whom He chooses and sends to share in the same ministry—the Twelve as signifying His mission to the People of God, and the Seventy as signifying His mission to the world (Luke 9_{1ff.}, 10_{1ff.}). These are sent as His messengers, His representatives, invested with authority by Him as He is invested with authority from God. Therefore He can tell them: 'He who receives you receives me, and he who receives him who sent me' (Matt. 10₄₀; Luke 10₁₆; John 13₂₀); while as for those who reject His messengers, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgement than for them (Matt. 10₁₅).

After His Resurrection, moreover, the authorization and sending out of His representatives continues, or rather, is resumed; for the commission given earlier to the disciples was limited, and they returned to Him when they had carried it out (Matt. 10₃₄; Luke 10_{17ff.}). But now He declares: 'All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations . . .' (Matt. 28_{18ff.}; cf. John 17₂). Hence when the apostles are asked by what authority they act, they can reply that it is by His authority (Acts 4_{7ff.}), for they have been chosen and sent by Christ Himself (Acts 9_{1ff.}, 22_{14,21}). They have been chosen and sent, moreover, for service (*diakonia*, ministry—Acts 1₁₇, 20₂₄), but for the service of the Word, not the serving of tables (Acts 6₁₋₇). An apostle is a servant of Jesus Christ (Rom 1₁) and a minister of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3₆), who speaks and acts on behalf of Christ, and is as it were the mouthpiece of God (2 Cor. 5_{20f.}). He is sent, specifically, to preach the Gospel (1 Cor. 1₁₇). Hence he can say: 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake' (2 Cor. 4₅).

But where the apostles come and are received, others are raised up to assist them in their work and to carry it on after them—prophets, evangelists, teachers, administrators, pastors; and when other forms of ministry change and pass away, the pastoral office remains, to which men are ordained and charged with the ministry of the Word and Sacraments. This office early developed a threefold structure—bishop, presbyter and deacon—of which the beginnings are discernible in the New Testament; but more important than its structure is its function, which in some circumstances may demand a modification of the structure for its effective fulfilment. Those who think the threefold—or any other—structure essential, so that there is no true ministry without it, might well ponder our Lord's rebuke to those who forbade a man to cast out demons in Christ's name 'because he followeth not with us' (Luke 9_{49f.}). On the other hand, those who do not possess the threefold ministry might equally well ask themselves whether their own alternative to it really serves the function of the ministry any more effectively.¹

The pastoral office exists in order that the Word of God may be brought to men by the Word and Sacraments of the gospel, and in order that men may be brought to God through Christ and made living members of the holy and royal priesthood which is Christ's Body, the Church. For that reason the pastoral office is characterized by the same notes of authority and service that we have

seen in the ministry of our Lord and His apostles (1 Cor. 16_{15f}; 1 Thess. 5₁₂; Heb. 13_{7, 17}; 1 Pet. 5_{2f}). It is true that all Christians have the duty of bearing witness to Christ in all the ways they can; it is also true that the Church can authorize, in case of need, others than ordained ministers to preach or to administer the sacraments; and, as Luther says, if a group of Christians were cut off from the rest of the Church, without an ordained minister among them, they could authorize one of themselves to be their minister in holy things.² But ordinarily this authority belongs to the pastoral office and is conferred by ordination at the hands of those already holding the office.

Ordination is the commission of Christ, the Head of the Body, conferred upon certain members of His Body, to ensure the perpetuation of the ministry of the Word. It is necessary that such commissioning should take place, if only because what is everybody's business easily becomes nobody's business unless it is specially made somebody's. It is also necessary for the sake of order in the Church, lest in a confusion of unauthorized zeal the Body of Christ should rather be broken down than built up. Ordination does not confer any special priestly powers on the minister, who is neither more nor less a priest than any other Christian, though his particular form of service bears a priestly character, as does all true service in the Church. But ordination does confer upon him an authority, which is not derived from his fellow-members in the Church, even though it is conferred through them, but which is given him by Christ. The minister is not, as it were, the elected representative or delegate of an ecclesiastical democracy, and thus a servant of the people's will. He is a servant of Jesus Christ, and he will serve his people best when both he and they remember that if he is also their servant, it is for Jesus' sake.

At the same time, the minister's authority is not given him in order that he may lord it over his people, but just in order that he may the more effectively serve. His authority does not belong to him personally, but to his office, and he has no claim to it except as he duly and faithfully fulfils the functions of his office. Here we must bear in mind the scriptural warnings against 'false apostles' and 'false teachers', who pervert the gospel and have therefore no authority to which the people ought to submit (2 Cor. 11, etc.); and we may recall that even a true apostle like St Peter is not infallible, and may sometimes have to be resisted (Gal. 2_{11f}). But better than this is to remember St Peter's words to the elders in his Epistle: 'Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, not by constraint, but willingly, not for shameful gain, but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock' (1 Pet. 5₂). For behind the apostle's words stand those of One far greater than he, who is both his Lord and ours:

Whoever would be great among you, shall be your minister, and whoever would be first among you, shall be the slave of all; for the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10_{44f}).

PHILIP S. WATSON

² Especially at a time like the present when the divisions of the Church obscure and distort the gospel that a divided world so desperately needs. The unity of the Church urgently requires expression for the sake of the gospel and the world; but in view of the fundamental importance of the ministry for the Church, effective unity is unlikely to be achieved without a unification of the ministry; and seeing that the threefold structure of the ministry is the oldest and most

Recent Literature

EDITED BY R. NEWTON FLEW

Natural Religion and Christian Theology, by A. Victor Murray. (Nisbet, 14s.)

Professor Murray has made a notable contribution to the modern approach to certain problems of Religion and Theology. He insists that 'Theology is essentially a human science and that 'all statements about God are inferences from experiences or corollaries from those experiences, unless they are pure speculation'. Early in the book the writer postulates an intriguing figure, the *Theological Man*, who reappears from time to time. He 'takes on the colour of his period and his voice is the voice of the *Zeitgeist*'; in other words he is a creation of the theologians, who invest him with such spiritual and moral attributes and needs as are consonant with their particular brand of theology. Thus, for example, we have the *Theological Man* of Calvinism and of Barth. Professor Murray has some caustic comments on theologians in general, and in Ch. iv. he re-introduces the *Theological Man*. Having already shown that 'he is an abstraction, an interpretation of something rather than the thing itself', he now poses the question, 'But what is he an abstraction from?' Does this 'essential man' really exist or is he merely a convenient theological symbol? In seeking an answer, he leads us into realms of anthropology, and deals with religious ideas, rites and institutions among primitive peoples today, of some of which he has first-hand knowledge. Aided and enlightened by folk-lore, child psychology, genetic psychology and the psychology of the unconscious, he concludes that 'primitive man is not just an archaic creature. . . . He is not a creature of time at all. He is, so to speak, an ingredient of human life wherever and and whenever it is found'. 'Theologies rise and flourish and change, but man remains a worshipping animal, the deepest needs of his heart remain to be satisfied and he still has his connection with the unseen world'.

Different individuals find these needs more or less met by different types of Religion and their accompanying theologies. 'Theological doctrines, as well as institutions, must be assessed in the context of experiences which they seek to explain and to standardize, and not only in accordance with some principle of logical arrangement or merely in opposition to some earlier theory put forward by someone else'. This passage illustrates the emphasis which the writer puts upon *persons* and *essential human nature* as of primary importance in all religious and theological considerations. In the light of this *dictum* he proceeds to discuss the Christian doctrine of the Atonement and gives a powerful and moving illustration taken from Maupassant's *Boule de Suif*. He argues cogently for the Christian conception of a personal God. After investigating the nature of Revelation and reaching conclusions much the same as those of writers like Dr John Baillie and Canon Smethurst, so acceptable to the modern mind, he pleads for Christ as the 'final' revelation, and deals with such subjects as Christianity and History, Redemption, Judgement, Institutional Religion and Christ and the Universe.

Professor Murray is acquainted with scientific developments in the physical, psychological, and other fields of research, and with the modern form of apologetic in which scientists and religious thinkers alike can join conscientiously and without

widespread in the Church, it has at least a strong claim to be considered as a basis for this unification.

² Luther states this position in his *Address to The Christian Nobility*. And in support of it, incidentally, he refers to the age-old principle that in cases of necessity (e.g. in the imminence of death) any Christian can administer baptism and give absolution. This, he says, would be impossible if we were not all priests.

mental reservations; their assumptions and conclusions are, indeed, integral but unobtrusive elements of this fascinating book. The style is easy and lucid and as free from technical expressions as one could reasonably expect. We are grateful to the author for leading us along such ways of intellectual and spiritual refreshment and enlightenment.

W. L. DOUGHTY

Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History, by Muhsin Mahdi. (Allen & Unwin, 30s.)

This interesting and fully documented book is by a member of the Faculty of Law at Baghdad, visiting lecturer at Freiburg University, and member of the Committee on Social Thought at Chicago University, under whose auspices the study was begun and carried out. Here we have a thoroughly competent and stimulating book almost unique in the English language, since, apart from Professor H. A. R. Gibb, German and French scholars seem to have had a European monopoly of the subject. This is surprising for one whom Meyerhof has described as 'the greatest intellect of his century', and whom Toynbee places alongside Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* as a source of inspiration to him. Ibn Khaldun's name does not appear in the index of the *Cambridge Medieval History*. Ibn Khaldun was born in Tunis A.D. 1333, and his home was a rendezvous for politicians. Early in life he was involved in political intrigues, and some apology seems required for his political opportunism. A man who acts as political advisor to capricious and often tyrannical rulers is bound to walk warily even when he is disinterested. Ibn Hazm, Avicenna, Averroes, and Ibn Khaldun all experienced exile, persecution, or imprisonment by offended rulers. By 1364 Ibn Khaldun was Prime Minister at Fez; but he was soon exiled to Egypt, where he was never at home, but where he lived in honour, holding the high office of Chief Judge of the Maliki School of Islamic Law and teaching at Al Azhar. He had come from Fez bitterly disillusioned and pessimistic, forced to the conclusion that it was hopeless to influence the ordering of the State by personal power, and ultimately this led to his withdrawal into himself to probe and analyse the causes which underlay the rise and decline of nations. At the same time, however, he remained still active in service for the State, and something of this dichotomy appears in his work. Dr Mahdi deals first with Ibn Khaldun's background, his political experiments and subsequent disillusionment, and his education. Part of his education was in accordance with orthodox requirements, and this subsequently fitted him for his high legal office; but he was also, in accordance with the higher education of his day, introduced to the rational sciences. He remained a faithful Muslim, although some writers consider that he adopted a cryptic style to cover fundamental disagreements. How he related his philosophy of culture to Islamic Law is not completely clear. Dr Mahdi thinks that for him the philosophy of culture was to Islamic law as *theoria* is to *praxis*. Certainly he maintained that in the ordering of the community the prophetic takes precedence of rational science. For the government of a community an appreciation of the nature and source of the prophet's knowledge is all important. Our author finds special significance in Ibn Khaldun's rejection of the usual Islamic terms for historiography (viz. *ta'rikh*, which is chronology or annals, and *akhbar*, which is the narration of events)—in favour of the term '*ibar*', which is a word used for admonition, for the interpretation of events, and indicates an intention to pass behind or through actual events and forms to an inward significance. It stands for a sort of 'demythologizing', whereby timeless causes and principles are indicated within timely happenings—something implicit in the Old Testament relation of the prophet to contemporary events. Ibn Khaldun has much that is suggestive for the prophetic view of history. A short review cannot do justice to the whole of the philosophy of culture presented in ample detail by Dr Mahdi. Gibb considered Ibn Khaldun's originality to consist in his detailed and objective analysis of political, social

and economic factors, while Toynbee finds inspiration in the spiritual character of his work, its insistence on the need to interpret history under the eye of God, though he thinks Ibn Khaldun was hampered in his diagnosis of causes by the circumstances of his time. But of the genius there is no shadow of doubt, and we are grateful to Dr Mahdi for introducing him so praiseworthily to an English-reading public.

J. W. SWEETMAN

Christianity and Economic Problems, by D. L. Munby. (Macmillan, 25s.)

There are many books about Christianity and sociology, but not nearly so many about Christianity and economics. This is therefore a welcome book. It is also an important one, because it is in a high degree authoritative. Mr Munby is lecturer in economics at Aberdeen University, and Vice-Chairman of the Department of Church and Society of the World Council of Churches. Part I is on General Principles on both sides. Any who fear to find a watery version of the Christian faith will be relieved by the thoroughness and depth of the first chapter. Man's social solidarity in sin is emphasized, the treatment of salvation is comparably adequate, and the Christian Hope is sharply distinguished from 'progress'—'Our little hopes for secular improvement have their place in God's scheme, but the quality of Christian hope is different'. It is immensely reassuring to find such a theological framework set out by an economist. Mr Munby goes on to Christian ethics, where he has a good word for the concept of natural law, and a salutary distinction in discussing the material world, between 'a carefree love of things' and 'attachment to things'. Explanation of the nature of economics is followed by two important chapters on the presuppositions of economists, showing how their outlook has influenced their theories. Finally in Part I there is a summary of what Christians have had to say about economic problems in the last century, culminating in the emphasis of the ecumenical movement. Mr Munby devotes Part II to Particular Problems, dealing with the economic issues, and the principles and difficulties which have moral facets. The problems which he discusses are mainly fundamental ones, such as the efficacy of the price mechanism, which arise from the kind of economy in which we live—a 'mixed' economy of free enterprise and limitation, or controlled capitalism. He declares that his own predilections are socialist. In view of this, his emphasis on the positive and indispensable function of the business-man in society, based on his expert understanding of economics, is very salutary. The real question to be asked of the whole system of free enterprise, he says, is whether adequate opportunities for enterprise exist and whether the best men are chosen. This is an open question, and there is room for experimentation with various forms of public enterprise. Those who ask, 'Where do we go from here in making the welfare society we already have more Christian?' will find, not only suggestions, but a great deal of insight into the system which is the datum for their social and economic engineering. In Part III, 'Conclusions', the author argues that Canon Demant's view of the decline of capitalism is over-pessimistic, but takes issue with some American writers who see economic progress as a significant partial end of human activity. He thinks a collectivist society, although it would be workable in this country, is undesirable. The various ways in which Christian principles should be applied are summarized. The framework of ecumenical social thinking is shown by quotations on relevant points from part III of the Evanston Assembly Report. Finally, Mr Munby comes back to theology. Men need to feel significant. The destiny of man is to be sought in God, and the Christian Hope, the belief in the Second Coming, involves a hope for humanity.

This is a cultured book, written with a clarity and directness achieved by some famous economists but few theologians. It is within the compass of the 'intelligent layman'.

D. A. KEIGHLEY

The Inevitable Choice: Vedanta Philosophy or Christian Gospel, by Edmund Davison Soper. (Abingdon Press via Epworth Bookshop, \$2.50.)

Dr E. D. Soper's central thesis in this book is that a major rival of Christianity today is the Indian revival of the Vedanta. He sees this rivalry not only in India, where a renaissance of Hinduism is challenging the growth of the Indian Church, but also in the West, where thinkers like Aldous Huxley are directly under the influence of the Ramakrishna Mission, and where others, like the great Toynbee himself, proclaim in a more general way the essential unity of all religions. In developing this thesis, Dr Soper gives a very competent and clear outline of Hinduism and a penetrating Christian criticism of it. He is particularly powerful and illuminating in two of his illustrations—that in which the exclusiveness of Christian doctrine is compared with the exclusiveness of Christian marriage, and that in which the contrast between the behaviour at death of Japanese and of German war criminals is based on contrasts between their beliefs about sin. Despite these merits, the book is not the great message that could have been kindled by so mighty a confrontation. Despite his scholarship and evident will to be fair, Dr Soper really has too straightforward a mind to respond fully to the inner tensions of the two great religions. He constantly finds inconsistencies and insufficiencies in Hinduism, as against a unified and sufficient whole of Christian doctrine that can be set up as a measuring-rod. In the last resort that is so—but not on any easy level. It will not do, for instance, just to show that the Sankara doctrine of *maya* tries inconsistently to assert unity and plurality at the same time, and to assert that Ramanuja and Madhva are more satisfactory because they somehow find more room for a personal God, unless one is also prepared to see that the Christian doctrines of creation, Divine Fatherhood and Trinity also abound in tensions, and that Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, and Aquinas all alike agonized in the same tensions, and for all the truth *ablit in mysterium*. Likewise with *karma*: it is right to use the stock objections to it only if at the same time one faces the tensions inherent in such relevant Christian doctrines as Divine grace, omnipotence, and justice. Against such a background, Dr Soper's fair-minded criticisms of Hindu doctrines and practices would have come to Hindus with a greater sense of sympathy than I fear they may now. Moreover he could have presented in a more fruitful way the contrast between Hindu tolerance (which is logically the moral outcome of any monism and any humanism) and the Christian absolute; and he could have helpfully related his thesis more directly to what is our main form of Hinduism in the West—that is, not the intellectualist influence of a few 'Hollywood Brahmins', but the prevailing climate of opinion that 'we are all going the same way'. In the main this book is true and important, as contending ably for the valid but neglected fact that Hinduism ought no longer to be left by us Westerners as a mere compartment of an academic 'Comparative Religions', but treated as a major system vitally relevant to our own thinking.

JOHN F. BUTLER

Philosophical Papers and Letters of Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, a selection edited and translated by Leroy E. Loemker. (University of Chicago Press, 2 vols., 90s. the set).

This selection of the works of Leibniz has been translated and edited by the Professor of Philosophy at Emory University. It must be regarded as a very fine piece of work, both in the translation, which reads very easily, and in the scholarship involved in making the selection. Professor Loemker has clearly established himself as a leading exponent of Leibniz, and this selection of philosophical works will open up the study of this great thinker to many who otherwise would only read summaries of his thought in histories of philosophy. There will, of course, be many who question the value of such a work, especially for those whose main interest is religious. Are we not told that nowadays philosophy no longer concerns itself with the great issues of reality and

reason, that theology has at last shaken off the shackles of its former companion, and that philosophy has no longer any validity for the theologian? Professor Loemker answers this in the words of Leibniz which originally applied to a minor thinker whom he thought worthy of consideration because of 'a basis of discourse worthy of a philosopher, and a time worthy of our own'. Certainly the thought of Leibniz, ranging over so many fields, is worthy of continued consideration, and we still have before us the objects he set himself to achieve—such as a comprehensive view of all human thought and activity, a deeper understanding between Catholics and Protestants, and a scheme of thought which can be used effectively in our modern technology. Leibniz, of course, failed in his objective; even his massive intellect proved incapable of synthesizing the multitude of ideas and theories which interested him. In our time the sum total of human knowledge is so much greater than that known by Leibniz that it becomes increasingly obvious that specialization is inevitable. But who except the theologian, helped by the philosopher, can hope to give modern man guidance in the use and value of his bewildering fund of knowledge? This selection has much to teach both theologian and philosopher, and perhaps most when, not accepting Leibniz's findings, they will find value for their own thought in knowing why they differ. Potential readers ought to be warned that this is no bedside book; its themes and its treatment of them both demand high concentration and willingness to take time to understand a detailed argument. But there is here, for those who seek it, that kind of enjoyment David Hume describes as arising in the pursuit of intellectual honesty and clarity. For this, and for the opportunity of reading Leibniz for ourselves, Professor Loemker's work is to be warmly welcomed.

WILLIAM STRAWSON

From My New Shelf

BY R. NEWTON FLEW

The Signs of our Times, by Maldwyn Edwards (Epworth Press, 22s. 6d.). The Cato Lecturer for 1957, by some miracle, found the leisure to write this book before he set foot in Australia at all. There are four sections of the book. The first begins with the estimate of man in the Renaissance, and the last chapter in this section ushers us into the twentieth century. Our civilization then was impressive, but 'it rested precariously on the character of man. When the foundations gave way, the whole edifice came tumbling to the ground.' Not the least merit of this book is that the author can see and appreciate two contradictory assumptions in contemporary life and thought and then declare that we need neither the optimists nor the pessimists. The second section is 'The Debate on the State'. Dr Edwards argues convincingly that the Welfare State 'demands the active co-operation of all its members. There is a public interest which transcends all private interests and there must be a general will . . . which actively seeks the good of the State.' But nationalization as a creed suffers from a naïve belief in the virtue of the State as distinguished from the vice of private citizens. Surveying the political condition of Europe between the First and Second World Wars, and the immense strengthening of the powers of the State, Dr Edwards phrases his problem thus: 'Is totalitarianism in some form inevitable?' The answer depends upon whether the Christian valuation of the State is accepted or rejected (p.62). The five pages which follow, defining this answer, are among the best in the book. Again, the challenge of Communism to the Christian Faith is defined as 'the call to assert the Christian ethic for the State, Society, and the individual. Only as it is contrasted with a philosophy which maximizes the State and minimizes God, will its rich adequacy become apparent.' The third section is 'The Debate on Society'. A grim, but only too truthful chapter on 'The Tenantless House', is followed by the more comforting 'Return to Order', in which Dr Edwards pays homage to the builders of the new bridge between science and religion—to Charles Raven, John Oman, William Temple, Macneile Dixon, H. G. Wood, A. J. Toynbee, and particularly Herbert Butterfield. The chapter, 'Unfinished Highway', surveys the great spheres in which order should be restored—The Family, Education, and Work. The fourth main section of the book (pp.141-70) is called 'The Debate on God', and relates the thought of the whole book to God: 'How can the orders discernible in the earth, and in the life upon it, be related to his all-embracing purpose?' Has the Christian Faith a relevant word to say as it confronts contemporary thought? The answer lies in our Lord's teaching on the Kingdom of God. This Cato Lecture will be welcomed by all who have read any of the former volumes which Dr Edwards has written. He has the preacher's gifts of lucidity and illustration. There is apt use of poetry and hymnology. The titles of chapters are picturesque. Already his chapter on 'The Two Gardens' has afforded devotional Sunday morning reading for the BBC. He has covered a vast field, but without strain. He deserves the thanks of his readers, and especially of his brothers in the ministry, for this book. It ought to be widely read.

Yulengor: Nomads of Arnhem Land, by Wilbur Chaseling (Epworth Press, 21s.). This book owes its origin to two sets of murders, both committed by Australian nomads living in the Stone Age. In 1932 the Yulengor killed five Japanese fishermen. In 1933 they killed two white prospectors, two beachcombers and a member of the police party. The response of so-called civilized countries to such a challenge has usually been a punitive expedition. But wiser plans prevailed. Instead of a regiment

they sent a missionary and his wife, people who could be trusted to serve the natives, and to make every possible effort to understand those who were still living in the Stone Age. The Methodist Missionary Society had the honour of providing this slender team, and this book shows how they approached their task and what they learnt. If there were any complaint to be made, it would be that Mr and Mrs Chaseling are too self-effacing. You will never dream, unless a third party tells you, that behind the description of the Yulengor, is one of the most heroic stories you have ever heard.

Studies in Biblical Theology, Nos. 20, 22, 23. *The Servant of God*, by W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias (S.C.M., 10s. 6d.). No. 20 of these Studies is devoted to the translation of the two articles from the famous Kittel Lexicon, one written by an Old Testament specialist, and the other by Professor Joachim Jeremias, whose monographs on the Parables and on the Eucharistic Words of Jesus are already known and highly valued in their English dress. Any translator of any 'Kittel' article into English is a benefactor to biblical studies in this country. How much more than when the articles concern the Suffering Servant of God! The value of the articles is enhanced by the three closely-printed pages of 'Bibliography' at the end of the book.

Essays on Typology, by G. W. H. Lampe and K. J. Woolcombe (S.C.M., 7s. 6d.). The authors explain in the Preface that the primary objects of their essays are different. Professor Lampe is aiming at 'establishing a rationale of typology'. This is badly needed, as the works of certain well-known theologians show. In the second essay there is an historical examination of the actual ways in which typology was employed in the scriptures and in the patristic writings. Both the essays are very interesting indeed and make good reading.

Promise and Fulfilment, by Werner Georg Kümmel (S.C.M. 12s. 6d.). This is No. 23 of the Studies in Biblical Theology, and is written by a learned Professor in Marburg. His aim is by means of exegesis to clear the way for the true interpretation (as he regards it) of the central message of Jesus. 'The message of the imminent coming of the Kingdom of God is therefore intended to confront men with the end of history as it advances towards the goal set by God' (p.152). It is the way of Jesus. He preaches the nearness of the Kingdom because that nearness means the redemptive activity of God. And that is the end towards which history moves. Whoso accepts the message in faith is very near to God; whoso rejects the news of that nearness is being judged here and now. The attitude of men to the earthly Jesus is the criterion for the verdict of Jesus, the eschatological Judge. The future expectation is essential and indispensable. Only in this form can the nature of God's redemptive action in history be held fast. These bare sentences cannot convey the ardour which inspires Kümmel's argument. He has considered it his duty to read most of the English and French and American books written in the last twenty years on this great theme. His interpretation is altogether opposed to that of Albert Schweitzer, but that does not mean that he supports the views of C. H. Dodd, or T. F. Glasson, or H. A. Guy, or his own colleague, Bultmann. The learned Marburg Professor has had the humility to learn from less gifted men, and so he has dugged a deeper well than most of us. This book may be recommended to any determined second-year theological student who wants to master his theme, and who will verify the references, especially those in the Bible.

Jésus et les païens, par J. Jeremias: traduction française de Jean Carrère (Delachaux & Niestlé, Neuchâtel, Suisse, 4 fr. 70.). This is the best modern discussion of the difficulty that, in certain passages, Jesus seems to limit missionary activity to work among the Jews. Dr Jeremias first examines three statements on the negative side—

no Gentile mission (Matt. 23₁₅, 10_{5ff.}, 15₂₄)—and then three positive statements—Yes! certainly Gentile missions (Luke 4_{16ff.}; Matt. 12₄₁, and 11₂, 10₁₅). Then, in the final chapter (pp. 49-65) comes the solution. I do not want to anticipate the reader's delight in reading the solution, but enough has been said, I hope, to send all readers (who have ten shillings and schoolboy French) to the book shop, and then to the study, to find out the solution to this fascinating puzzle. Dr Jeremias has more than a brilliant solution of a puzzle in his mind. The sentence which ends the second chapter is deep in religious meaning. The same profound and stirring note is sounded on the last page of the book: 'In effect, the sayings of Jesus which refer to Gentiles are (1) an encouragement to humility, . . . and (2) a revelation of the grandeur and the responsibility of missionary work. . . . With Pentecost the End has begun'.

Christian Ethics, by Georgia Harkness (Abingdon Press via Epworth Bookshop, \$3.75). Dr Harkness is a Professor of 'Applied Theology' at the Pacific School of Religion, and therefore particularly competent to write a book on this theme for university students and thoughtful lay people. She knows that 'Christian Ethics is everybody's business and not alone that of the professional moralist'. This book is full of common sense allied to uncommon learning. She deals with practical issues such as the Christian use of property and wealth, the Christian view of work, and the Race problem. There is a welcome treatment of Pacifism and non-Pacifism and the last section of the book is devoted to 'Christian Ethics and Culture'. In her discussion she is guided, as others of us have been, by the great book of Richard Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture*. Nevertheless, she takes her own independent view throughout. I do not know of a better book on this subject for 'the ordinary person'.

Fundamentalism and the Church of God, by Gabriel Hebert (S.C.M., 15s.; also available in paper covers, 7s. 6d.). This book fits the hour. It is addressed to those who describe themselves as 'conservative evangelicals', and whom others call Fundamentalists. It comes from a gifted author who cannot by any stretch of imagination be called 'Modernist', and who in times past has criticized 'the critics'. Father Hebert is an ambassador for peace, as all true Christians ought to be. He does not see why I.V.F. and S.C.M. should be pursuing separate paths. The book shows the gentleness and ease of style which characterize all his previous books, but there is good solid argument in every chapter. Not the least interesting are the sections 'Jesus Only', from a Swedish novel by the Bishop of Gothenburg (pp.102-16), and 'the closed mind' by Sir John Wolfenden (pp.139-41). It will never do for those who preach and receive reconciliation at the cross to be laggard in the task of reconciliation with their brothers in the Church of God.

'Twixt the Mount and Multitude: The Relevance of John Wesley to his age, by Irvonwy Morgan (Epworth Press, 6s.). These lectures approach the familiar story from a fresh point of view. Dr Morgan maintains the thesis that the conversion of May 24th had sprung out of a changed view of scripture, and that this changed view is an aspect of his conversion which has been completely neglected by writers on Wesley. Previously he had hoped to attain the goal of sanctification by self-discipline and holy love. His guides had been Jeremy Taylor, William Law, and Thomas à Kempis. After 1738, he realized that he had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift of victory. His guide was Scripture, and his conception of Holiness became Scriptural holiness. I can with confidence recommend Dr Morgan's little book.

Mastery and Mercy: A Study of two Religious Poems, by Philip M. Martin (O.U.P., 15s.). This is an attempt to elucidate the two most difficult religious poems of our time—'The Wreck of the Deutschland', by G. M. Hopkins, and 'Ash Wednesday', by

T. S. Eliot. The author himself has received 'encouragement of inestimable spiritual value' from these poems, and modestly offers some of his meditations upon them. The explanations are lucid and painstaking. The quotations from other writers, e.g. St Augustine, John Newton, and Evelyn Underhill, are most felicitously placed. He finds hidden meaning and unsuspected beauty in the obscure language of the two poets. The reading of his notes is a spiritual exercise. But in view of his appeal to 'the ordinary person', I hope, rather doubtfully, that he will indeed 'fit audience find though few'.

Methodism and the Love-Feast, by Frank Baker (Epworth Press, 5s.). The standard work on this subject is *Love Feasts* (1916), by Richard Lee Cole, of Dublin, and in his recent work, *More about the Early Methodist People*, Dr Leslie Church gives fifteen pages to this theme. This little book by Dr Frank Baker tells us all we need to know, and is up to date. The eight chapters include one on the Love-Feast in the Daughter-Churches, and one on the Norfolk experiment in the promotion of Church Unity. There must be living those, like myself, who have memories of partaking in decorous love-feasts, not so 'popular and exciting' as they were in 1836 (see p. 37). The book is both a contribution to our knowledge, crammed with learning, and a lively piece of reading.

An Introduction to Asian Religions, by E. G. Parrinder (S.P.C.K., 4s. 6d.). The author has written a delightful book on the five chief religions of Asia; Islam, Indian Religion, Buddhism, Chinese Religion, Japanese Religion. It is simple, well-arranged, impartial, and up-to-date. Dr Parrinder discusses only the religions which are living and which have a literature. He does not include Christianity, because this handbook is meant for Christian readers, whom he can trust to make their own comparisons when they know the facts. Despite the aim of the author to be factual, he arranges his material with such skill that the reader is borne on from chapter to chapter, and suddenly realizes that he has finished the book! After 136 pages he wants more, and there are lists of other books at the end of each chapter. I hope thousands of people will buy this book.

Jesus in the Background of History, by A. L. Polack and W. W. Simpson (Cohen & West, 16s.). This is a most unusual book. For many years the authors have worked together in the Council of Christians and Jews. Mr Polack is a member of the Jewish faith, and he is delightfully yoked in this book with our own Methodist. The major part of the book is the presentation of Jesus from the Jewish point of view. The question on which the two necessarily fall apart are dealt with in the passages printed in italics. The book is easy to read. It will be especially valuable for young theological students. But I could press it on the attention of a whole generation of Christians who have inherited a leaning towards Anti-Semitism. This book proves, like the office from which it comes, that Jew and Christian can work together, and sometimes share each others worship. They can be divided on the ultimate question: 'What think ye of Christ?' But the division is transformed by the greatest thing in the world, the neighbourly love on which (as a first-century Rabbi said) the whole world depends.

They Need No Candle: The Men who Built the Scottish Kirk, by N. B. Morrison (Epworth Press, 5s.). Presbyterians have saints, even if they have no bishops! The proof of it is in this book. Two, Patrick Hamilton and Andrew Melville, did their work in the sixteenth century. Two, Samuel Rutherford and Robert Leighton, in the seventeenth, the Erskines in the eighteenth, and five in the nineteenth and twentieth. The more recent names are more familiar to English readers—J. McLeod Campbell, Norman McLeod, Thomas Chalmers, Robert Rainy, John White. All are household

names in Scotland; all are in the apostolical succession which forms a 'living chain between us and the Church of the Early Reformers'. The author gives us not full biographies, but living sketches, and she knows and bears her witness to the open secret of their power.

The Chaos of Cults, by J. K. van Baalen (Pickering & Inglis, 22s. 6d.). This lively study of modern cults is the most comprehensive known to me. It gives the latest news about Spiritism, Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Liberal Catholic Church, Christian Science, Baha-ism, Anglo-Israelism, Buchmanism, Seventh-Day Adventism, and Swedenborgianism. It should not be dismissed as something only needed in the U.S.A. The British minister will not be long in his pastorate before he is confronted with one of these cults, so strangely alluring to an uneducated or half-educated mind, and then he will want the answer which this book can give. But in honesty one or two misgivings must be confessed by one reader who is not classed with the Modernists. Is it fair to pack 'Unitarianism-Modernism' in the same bag as Russellism? And could not Buchmanism be treated, not according to the phrase on p.171 ('The movement is as pretentious as ever'), but according to the counsel of Gamaliel? 'Refrain from these men, and let them alone.'

Pelagius; A Historical and Theological Study, by John Ferguson (Heffer, Cambridge, 15s.). It seems incredible that we had to wait till 1956 for a British monograph devoted to Pelagius the Briton. The Cambridge University Press published Souter's edition of Pelagius' *Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St Paul* (1922-31). But Mr John Ferguson, who won the Kaye Prize in Cambridge for this work, has had no predecessor. The first three chapters deal with the fourth-century background; the titles are 'The Situation of the State', 'The Condition of the Church', and 'Britain'. 'Pelagius: the First Period' is the subject of the fourth, and 'Augustine' of the fifth. The story is well told; most of the actors are now upon the stage, and the end of the tragedy is played out in the next two chapters: 'Events in Palestine', and 'The Judgement of Rome'. The last seventy pages contain the chief chapters by which the book should be estimated: 'The Theology of the Commentaries', 'Pelagius' Contribution to Christian Thought', and 'The Issues of Pelagianism'. Not the least boon which Mr Ferguson has given to theological students is the Bibliography—first, a list of the writings of Pelagius himself, which are scattered in various periodicals and volumes (this is based on the lively book of de Plinval); and second, a list of the relevant articles and books published in this century, with a sprinkling of some earlier works. The great advantage of treating heresy in a monograph is that the chief heretic can be considered first as a human being. The testimony to the character of Pelagius is convincing. Augustine speaks of him as 'a man of holy life, and no small attainments as a Christian'. He was an intimate correspondent of St Paulinus of Nola. He was quite sincere in his conviction that not one of the opinions which he held was unorthodox. Mr Ferguson points out that he was a reformer in practical Christian ethics. (1) He insisted on being called a layman. While not denying that the clerical was the higher calling, he claimed a divine call to the office of lay teacher. (2) He gave particular heed to the many sayings in the Gospels about the danger of riches. Mr Ferguson points out how he begins his thinking from the fact of the sinfulness of man, and claims, I think justly, that Pelagius takes a gloomier view than his opponents of the 'general standard of contemporary morality, and attributes it to a failure on the part of each individual. . . . He looks into his own heart . . . and with humility sees the same failure there'. Mr Ferguson does not 'take the side of Pelagius', unless to treat the heretic sympathetically and to quote some of the finest passages in his writings to take his side. He says that Pelagius' language obscures the divine initiative. 'It is undoubtedly true that Pelagius' theology is defective at this

point. 'The Cross is not central to his thinking.' But I am left with an uncomfortable feeling that if Pelagius had to be condemned and turned out of the Holy Places, a very frightening proportion in some modern congregations ought to share his fate! I hope students of theology both in colleges and out of them will read this book.

Letters to the Seven Churches, by William Barclay (S.C.M. Press, 8s. 6d.). This is just the book which the preacher needs to help him in a series of sermons or, better still, in an informal Bible class where a large map would not be out of place. Mr Barclay has contributed to the armoury of illustrations, by quotations from a certificate of sacrifice to the God-Emperor at the end of the first century, from the experience of his own father (a lovely story), from Thomas Goodwin, G. K. Chesterton and Tertullian, Cicero and Demosthenes, Kipling, John Wesley, H. F. Lyte, and W. R. Maltby. But even better than that, he has written a book which is full of Christ and reads like a labour of love.

The Book of Revelation, translated by J. B. Phillips (Geoffrey Bles, 9s. 6d.). This book is the climax of the translator's work. He approaches his task with reverence. His theory is that the writer wrote down what he saw while he was seeing it. This would 'account for the incoherence, the strange formation of sentences, the repetition'. The intense emotion of being in the heavenly places, and seeing 'things invisible to mortal sight', is in part communicable to us to-day.

In this conviction, the translator retains the air of mystery which pervades the King James's version, and indeed sometimes he adds to the impressiveness of it. In Revelations 9₁₃ ('I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God'), is translated: 'I heard a solitary voice speaking from the four corners of the altar that stands in the presence of God.' Mr Phillips must be congratulated on this addition to his labour of love.

Israel and the Aramaeans of Damascus, by Merrill F. Unger (James Clarke, 21s.). 'The conservative scholarship which characterizes this book is representative of the Evangelical Theological Society' which has sponsored it. So says the Foreword. Dr Unger is Old Testament Professor in Dallas Theological Seminary, Texas. The subject is relations between Israel and Damascus between 900 B.C. and 750 B.C. The book shows the usual features of good doctrinal theses, and it certainly is not easy reading. But anyone who has followed the course of modern archaeology will greet this monograph with pleasure and admiration, if not always with agreement. The story is told in 108 pages, and notes and Index occupy nearly 80 pages. The whole drama is outlined in the ten chapter headings, each beginning with Damascus. The period stretches from the time when Egypt was the controlling power, through the brief period of Hebrew supremacy to the period of decline of both Damascus and Israel, with implacable hatred between them for more than a century and a half. The Northern Kingdom came to its end only a decade after the Aramaean state of Damascus, when both fell beneath the iron heel of Assyrian Sargon.

The Pocket William Law, edited by Arthur W. Hopkinson (Epworth Press, 6s.). Most Christians who read any books at all are familiar at least with *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. This volume contains the essence of three other books from Law's pen, at least as valuable—*The Treatise on Christian Perfection*, *The Spirit of Prayer*, and *An Appeal to all that doubt or disbelieve the Truths of the Gospel*. There is a foreword by the late Archbishop of York.

NOTABLE ARTICLES IN PERIODICALS

Novum Testamentum, October 1956

The Cryptology of Parables in St. Mark's Gospel, by T. A. Burkill.

Hibbert Journal, January 1957.

Christianity and History, by C. B. Armstrong.

The Vatican Excavations and the Tomb of St Peter by J. Gwyn Griffiths.

Judaism, Fiction and Fact, by Rabbi E. Frisch.

The Yale Review, Spring, 1957.

Britain after Churchill, by D. L. Macfarlane.

The International Review of Missions, April 1957.

The Uganda Church Today, by J. V. Taylor.

Rethinking Missions, after Twenty-five Years, by Kenneth Scott Latourette.

Kraemer Then and Now, by Sabapathy Kulandran.

Modern Methods of Evangelism, by John Garrett.

The International Review of Missions, July 1957.

A Centre for the Study of Hinduism; A New Venture in Christian Evangelism in India, by P. D. Devanandan.

Scripture Distribution in the Living Indigenous Church, by John Fleming.

Atonement in Judaism and the Missionary Approach, by Eric S. Gale.

Interpretation, April 1957.

The Preacher, the Scholar, and the Gospel of John, by Raymond T. Stamm.

Fulfillment in the Fourth Gospel; The Old Testament Foundations, by Richard Morgan.

The Unity of the Church; An exposition of John 17, by Jean Cadier.

It is Hard to Be a Christian; A Sermon, by Donald G. Miller.

The Bible and Modern Religions; Fundamentalism, by Gabriel Hebert.

The Theology of Calvin, by Wilhelm Niesel, reviewed by John T. McNeill.

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Owing to further recent increases in the cost of production, the Publishers much regret that it has been found necessary to raise the price of the LONDON QUARTERLY & HOLBORN REVIEW to 4s. 6d. per copy. Outstanding annual subscriptions will, of course, remain at the old rate (of 4s. per copy) until expiry. The new annual subscription rate is now 20s. post free.

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The Editor is always pleased to consider articles, or suggestions for articles, for the LONDON QUARTERLY & HOLBORN REVIEW. Typescripts should not normally exceed 2,500 words in length, and a stamped addressed envelope should also be enclosed.

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